The Shapeliest Legs Under The Council Table: Defining The Feminist Influence On Women In British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980

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Abstract

The complex relationship between politics and feminism in British Columbia between 1950 and 1980 is explored in this thesis, with an emphasis on the media's role in forming the identities of women involved in local government. The careers of Beth Wood of New Westminster, Carrie Jane Gray of Prince George, and Doreen Lawson of Burnaby will be used as examples of how women were expected to maintain a feminine appearance and still demonstrate an aptitude for work that had once been determined best suited for men. Newspaper portrayals of these women often accentuated the differences between women politicians and their male colleagues, making equality a more difficult objective to attain. Even though these women did not appear to advocate feminist causes, by today's standards, however, these women would be considered feminists because of their convictions and actions and by opening the doors of city hall for future generations of women.

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for my mom

rainbows from crystals
you hung in winter sun's sight
dance for a soul's joy

Introduction:

The Shapeliest Legs Under the Council Table[1]: Defining the Feminist Influence on Women in British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980

> "It's difficult to get a woman nominated for political office and I don't think our political climate is advanced as far, unfortunately, as India's ... Although we've had the vote for 50 years, we've got a long way to go."[2]
>
> ~ Eileen Dailly, MLA Burnaby North ~

Eileen Dailly's comment on the status of women in politics in 1968 was neither optimistic nor pessimistic: it was realistic.[3] Reporter Ian MacAlpine of the *Vancouver Province* asked her in 1968 if she would consider running for the provincial leadership of British Columbia's New Democratic Party (NDP). Dailly replied that although she had thought about the possibility, she felt the timing was not yet right, although she hoped "some day a woman will be able to consider running but we have to involve a lot more women in politics."[4] Her reflection was particularly striking because it appears that she believed women needed to have other women for support in positions of power and that they were not "able to consider" these roles without it. Dailly's was a common misconception rooted in the failure to recognise that many women had already taken on public leadership roles alongside men. Instead

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[1] "Sense of Humor, Too: Beth Wood Helps Self – And Others," *The Vancouver Sun*, 7 December 1954.

[2] Ian MacAlpine, "Barrett Expected To Race," *The Province*, 12 November 1968.

[3] Eileen Dailly was an active member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Vancouver before she was old enough to vote. She taught school in Burnaby from 1947 to 1956 but quit in order to raise her family, although she was elected that same year as a school trustee for the Burnaby School Board. She was eventually elected as Chair and in 1966 the New Democrat Party approached her to run for provincial office in the new constituency of Burnaby North. She would hold the seat from 1966 to 1983, acting as the NDP's shadow critic on education and, when the NDP was elected to office in 1972 under the leadership of David Barrett, she retired from provincial politics in 1986 although she remained active in local affairs. See "Eileen E. Dailly" at http://www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/residents/about/hstryh/ freeman/dailly.html and "The Homeroom – Eileen Dailly" at http://www.mala.bc.ca/homeroom/content/ topics/People/dailly.htm, accessed 31 January 2008.

[4] MacAlpine, *The Province*.

of emphasizing women's successful achievements to date, Dailly concentrated on what was still missing. Further, her view also implied that there was an unnamed and unarticulated "something" in British Columbia's political climate holding women back, despite the province's reputation for being progressive regarding women's rights.[5] Notwithstanding these inferences imbued in Dailly's observations, there were women in the province who had already marched forward, sought out, and obtained positions of power and, more often than not, these achievements had taken place within municipal politics.

The pervasive attitude that women's careers like Eileen Dailly's were dependent upon equal representation in numbers rather than equal treatment affected victories that were doubly difficult to attain. Superfluous attention paid to inadequate female participation led to oversight of the gains already made, in part, because many of the victories were at the municipal level. Local politics and governance remain an important yet largely neglected area in the study of women and political involvement despite the larger numbers of women taking active roles at that level than at other levels. Scholars, perhaps unintentionally, have lowered the perceived importance of municipal politics, giving it little attention while employing language that set local government apart from other levels of politics. But, to the extent that Dailly seemingly overlooked women's achievements in municipal government, it is equally true that Canadian society has historically been uncomfortable with, and unable to respond appropriately to, any women in public life. In an attempt to fashion some

[5] Sylvia Bashevkin, *Toeing the Lines: Women and Party Politics in English Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14; Louise Carbert, "Historical Influences on Regional Patterns of Election of Women to Provincial Legislatures," in *Political Parties, Representation and Electoral Democracy in Canada,* ed. William Cross (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002), 202, 205.

degree of comfort with women in the public eye, a media-induced interest in their appearance and demeanour took attention away from their ideas and opinions. Further, when attention was paid to their positions and arguments, women politicians were more commonly criticised for being uninformed on the issues. The emphasis on differences would make it seem more difficult for women to secure equality; however, women in municipal politics embraced those differences and used them as a springboard to prove they were equally resourceful and capable.

Three women who shared a common goal of eliciting change in their communities between 1950 and 1980 are at the heart of this thesis. Beth Wood served New Westminster as Alderman and Mayor from 1948 to 1964; in Burnaby, Doreen Lawson was on the Parks and Recreation Commission from 1965 to 1971 and an Alderman/Councillor from 1971-1999; and Carrie Jane Gray sat as both Alderman and Mayor of Prince George from 1952 to 1975. Altogether, these three women accumulated 63 years of experience in politics. Each woman had her own individual reasons for entering civic politics; however, regardless of motivation, they helped many other women force open the doors of city hall with determination and perseverance. Based on these three women's public lives, this thesis examines the intersection between ideas about politics, feminism, gender and equality and the extent to which these notions shaped how these women pursued careers in British Columbian municipal politics. While it is certain that all three women benefited from feminist achievement in the first half of the twentieth century, they did not publicly call themselves feminists. It is equally clear that they were compelled to embrace an appropriate feminine image to survive in a masculine world in which women juggled

polar images. This feat amounted to a "Victor Victoria" phenomenon wherein respectable middle-class white women were obliged to maintain feminine respectability while functioning in what had traditionally been the masculine political world. The careers of Gray, Wood, and Lawson reveal how a varied combination of attributes built and sustained successful careers in British Columbian local politics between 1950 and 1980. Their individual and collective experiences suggest that it was necessary for women to inhibit their responses to contemporary "radical" feminist ideas and causes. Despite these women's preference to maintain equality and challenge municipal governments to improve the quality of life for all citizens, the media continued to emphasize differences and downplay women's abilities and strengths as public servants which served as a tool to control women politician's attitudes.

This introduction will serve three additional purposes. First, a short methodology section on sources and terminology chosen will establish the groundwork for what follows. Second, an examination of the statistics of women's participation in all levels of politics in British Columbia between 1950 and 1980 will place Wood, Lawson and Gray within a framework that suggests their comparative representational roles. Finally, a brief biographical introduction to these women's lives prior to political involvement will set the stage for examining their careers within the interpretative context of women's municipal political activism in the post-World War II era.

Sources about women in municipal politics can be problematic for various reasons; however, there are ways of overcoming the difficulties to produce an

accurate version of events. Unfortunately, the range of primary sources available about women in municipal politics is not ample because city halls and local archives did not have the space or the personnel to store documents once deemed unimportant. Therefore, newspaper reporting provides the bulk of the narratives used to characterize these women's careers. Although newspapers have their own prejudices (which is apparent in the occasional unfair treatment of two of the three women), newspapers do provide a glimpse of local attitudes towards these women. These attitudes, it can be argued, may be generated by the newspapers themselves, but it is important not to ignore them completely either, for this is often the only link between public and politician. Further, newspapers often quoted the women directly, giving them a voice despite the discriminate way editors chose to display those quotes.

More importantly, as Barbara Arneil points out, "it is critical that we never lose sight of the snapshot contained in the newspaper" because of the gender imbalance contained within it.[6] This gender imbalance will prove useful when examining the media's representation of women in political office. While the council minutes do not give actual transcripts of council meetings, they do provide a chronological map of council projects and often a transcript of discussions, verifying newspaper reporting. By interviewing various family members and acquaintances of the three women, certain insights have been opened up that were not available in other sources. These sources revealed insight not previously available about the women's lives. For the statistics utilized later in the introduction, no previous compilation had been made about women in British Columbia municipal politics so it was necessary to contact the city halls, archives, and newspapers of the towns and

[6] Barbara Arneil, *Politics and Feminism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 1.

cities in BC with a population over 4,000 in 1950. The intent of this research is to see how representative these three women were to the rest of the women involved in municipal and broader spectrum politics in this province. Throughout this research, various papers and documents have also surfaced, such as official letters and reports to council. Finally, photos and editorial cartoons presented to the public with an eye to both entertain and manipulate public opinion provide important pictorial insight into these women's careers. Through critical analysis of these primary sources, a better understanding of how the public perceived these women is accomplished.

While there has been a plethora of literature published on women in provincial and federal politics, scholars have written little about either women or men in municipal politics. The silence implies, mistakenly, that the history of local politics is unimportant. When scholars do give municipal politics attention, it is usually in the form of a perfunctory overview that reinforces the impression of limited importance or relevance. In writing about politics in general, the language used becomes problematic. Most texts refer to higher levels of government as "elite," which gives the impression that anything lower on the political ladder is irrelevant and deserves less attention. Scholars should therefore employ different terminology because municipal politics is just as essential as provincial or federal politics and requires equal attention. In that same line of thought, provincial politics should not be lumped together with federal politics under the single term "elite" because each level provides very different services to the electorate. Referring to these two levels of government as "broader spectrum" affords an adequate solution to this problem.

As levels of governmental power increase, the range of population expands, further removing the representatives from public reach. Municipal politics is not like this. Because they live and work in the same community as rate payers, local politicians are more accessible and the changes they introduce are tangible to both themselves and their neighbours. Indeed, they have much more than their careers invested in the community. Political change occurs more noticeably at the local level and exhibits an organic base for policy development. It is for reasons such as these that the scholars should be looking more carefully at all aspects of municipal governance. Particularly since World War II (WWII) and the expansion of the welfare state, it has been increasingly impractical for federal or provincial government to take care of local details considering the size and diversity of British Columbia, making municipal government necessary.[7] In this way, local government could be termed "narrow spectrum." Local government also presents the opportunity for change dispersion – sweeping reform often begins at the local level and, if successful, other communities and broader spectrum governments adopt it. No matter if the population is two or two million, everyone belongs to a community somewhere, and political change begins with the ideas of individuals and the co-operation of a group with a common goal.

The secondary sources available often use language and terminology that is ambiguous. As has already been explained, the language used to describe different levels of politics needs revision so that value is restored to the local level. The context for a few other words needs some clarification. Because the suffix "man" in

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[7] Robert L. Bish, *Local Government in British Columbia* (Richmond, BC: Union of British Columbia Municipalities, 1990), 16.

"alderman" is archaic and is problematic in the face of modern sensitivities, the term was abolished in Britain in the early 1970s. The term "councillor," is less gender specific in that it simply means "assimilated to council." Different communities used different terminology, even within a single province. Burnaby, for example, underwent several restructuring changes: mayors to reeves and aldermen to councillors – and back again. Since there were several terms used in the province between 1950 and 1980, the term "councillor" will be used when referring to the general role of men and women sitting on council, and "alderman" when referring to an individual's title in order to maintain the spirit in which it was used. The terms "feminism," "gender," "politics," and "equality" will be explored much more deeply in Chapter One. These definitions come from modern perceptions shaped by historical awareness. Without suggesting that these are the interpretations accepted by people in the past, they do allow for a broadened and practical exercise in applying the terminology in an historical context that considers events across North America.

Although Canadian scholars have not paid a great deal of attention to municipal politics, the American literature offers an experiential and interpretative base from which the Canadian political environment might be illuminated. After all, the study of municipal politics in the two countries potentially overlaps because of similar political structures and attitudes surrounding women in public life. In that sense, American women's experiences in municipal government can provide a valuable model for comparison with Canadian women. For example, even after accounting for cultural and regional differences, politically active women in both countries have tended to be white and middle-class, a convention that has begun to

change only in recent years. Further, both societies have been more accepting of women as municipal politicians because the break from traditional female roles is less obvious. Municipal politics is considered "part-time," giving women ostensibly more time to spend with their families. As a result, women could become involved in municipal government while remaining "the faithful guardian of the home."[8] Municipal politics functioned as a stepping-stone into the broader world without having to go too far from the hearth.

According to research on participation rates, municipal office is the preferred entry point into politics because of the proximity of home and work. Further, municipal government offers a variety of local portfolios, it can be much more forgiving with the demands of family life, the financial demands of electioneering can be less of an issue, and municipal politics' non-partisan character facilitated women's entry.[9] Another reason offered by Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Vengroff is that women face less competition from men in municipal politics because the seats are typically less powerful and with fewer benefits than seats in broad spectrum politics.[10] This argument regrettably reinforces the notion that municipal politics is less important than the broad spectrum by suggesting that women have settled for less power and fewer benefits than have those men who preferred to pursue a more

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[8] Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, edited by David J. Halpin, 4th Session – 16th Parliament, 20-21 George V, (Ottawa: F.A. Acland Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1930), 8.

[9] Janine Brodie, *Women and Politics in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1985), 82; Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Vengroff, "Representational Gains of Canadian Women or Token Growth? The Case of Quebec's Municipal Politics," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 30, 3 (1997): 514; Jill McCalla Vickers and M. Janine Brodie, "Canada," in *The Politics of the Second Electorate: Women and Public Participation: Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, West Germany, Italy, Finlnd, Eastern Europe, USSR, Japan*, eds. Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 59.

[10] Gidengil and Vengroff, 514.

rewarding political career. The implication is also that municipal politics is not rewarding, highlighting a failure to recognise that narrow spectrum politics manages a different set of functions than other levels. Still, less competition at the municipal level did not inspire zeal for involvement among women – participation rates remained relatively low until the early 1970s and the emergence of second-wave feminism.[11]

A reason for the lack of interest in politics among women that repeatedly emerges out of the literature is one that has undergone considerable debate: "socialization." Although this was once generally accepted as true, scholars' opinions have recently changed on this nature versus nurture debate. Socialization supposedly affected women in two ways: first, they were brought up to believe that women left the politics to men and, second, adult and family obligations precluded taking on challenges outside of the home. Until recently, scholars have accepted this explanation for why women appeared uninterested in public life. Janine Brodie presents the most compelling argument against socialization:

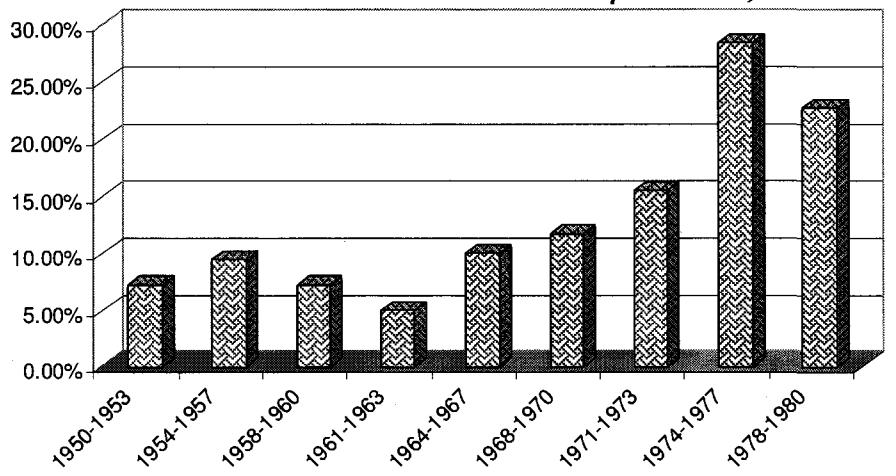
> the findings and conclusions of socialization studies [...] have been criticized for focusing on early political attitudes, which are often whimsical and unreal, and for assuming that childhood attitudes determine adult behaviour, an assumption that has never been convincingly demonstrated. More important to our concerns, research examining gender differences in the political attitudes of boys and girls has been challenged as being sex-biased.[12]

She argues that the socialization explanation led to a self-fulfilling prophecy: "The nearly exclusive election of males to public office creates the expectation that only males should seek office," and that "popular perceptions continue to reflect the patriarchal divisions of early liberal thought, according to which politics is a more

[11] See Figure 1. See Appendix A for citations for all following figures.
[12] Brodie, *Women and Politics*, 26.

appropriate 'masculine' than 'feminine' pursuit."[13]

Figure 1
Women Councillors in British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980



While scholars such as Brodie are sceptical of socialization, others subscribe to it in some fashion. David B. Hill found the pervasive nature of socialization difficult to refute: "[r]esearch has shown that Americans are socialized to believe that politics is men's work and not an appropriate pursuit for women. This bias in the American political culture can arbitrarily '...limit women's personal development, social choices, and opportunity to share fully in the dominant values of the society.'"[14] Although society did not actively seek out ways of limiting women's inclusion, socialization can have a passive negative impact on women's choices. Further, a similar trend was occurring in Canada as Sydney Sharpe explains: "Deeply rooted in the Canadian psyche is the contrary notion that women should stick to the private sphere of home and family while men do the public work—'the big shiny

[13] Ibid., 7; and Janine Brodie, "Women and Political Leadership: A Case For Affirmative Action," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, eds. Maureen Mancuso and Richard G. Price, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 78.

[14] David B. Hill, "Political Culture and Female Political Representation," *The Journal of Politics* 43, 1 (1981): 160.

jobs,' in Judy LaMarsh's phrase."[15] Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring wrote that as of 1990, "[p]olitical ambition is undoubtedly influenced by career choice and family obligations. It also may be a function of gender role socialization. Even well after the feminist movement has ostensibly shaken traditional gender stereotypes, ambition continues to be a characteristic associated with the male role."[16] Further, the title of their article, "Victims of Circumstances: Women in Pursuit of Political Office," suggests that women were at the mercy of the stereotypes and had little choice in the matter.

Explanations for women's general lack of interest in politics other than socialization that have been presented include assertiveness issues, time constraints of familial concerns, and lack of political experience.[17] Sylvia Bashevkin presented evidence by several well-known academics supporting the "isolation" theory in which women's household duties prohibit them from engaging in political activity. However, Bashevkin countered that "[e]stablished studies of public opinion and electoral behaviour in Canada have generally failed to consider women's political attitudes," and that arguments about how "isolation in the domestic household shapes women's political attitudes deserve careful scrutiny."[18] Brodie and others concur that many women enter politics directly from the role of wife and mother and that "the potential for women in politics is not sealed in early childhood [...W]omen can potentially enter politics at any time in their lives under a variety of circumstances."[19]

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[15] Sydney Sharpe, *The Gilded Ghetto: Women and Political Power in Canada* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1994), 5.

[16] Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring, "Victims of Circumstances: Women in Pursuit of Political Office," *The American Political Science Review* 84, 1 (1990): 214.

[17] Brodie, "Women and Political Leadership," 78.

[18] Bashevkin, 35-36.

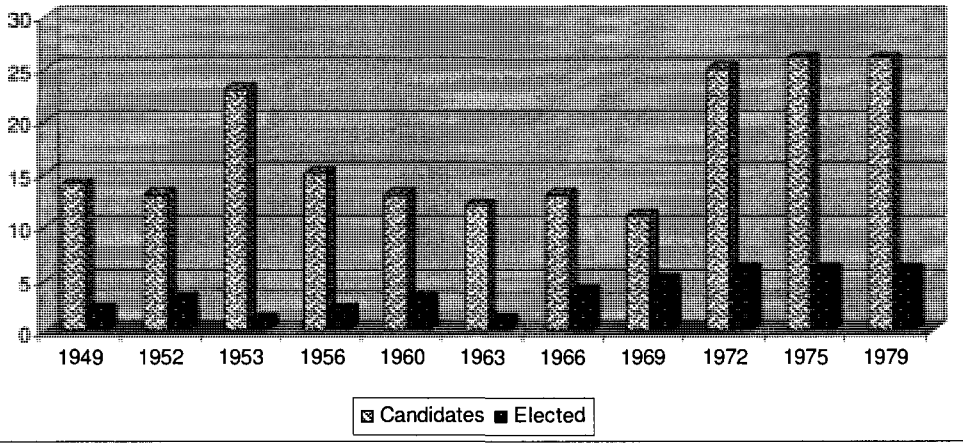
[19] Brodie, *Women and Politics*, 8 & 39.

The inference here is that if socialization was as pervasive as early scholars had thought it was, it would have been a tool as dangerous as brainwashing or hypnotism. Brodie also adds that it is important to recognize that women do not always choose the same path in life:

> Not all women embody the traditional female gender-role prescriptions of wife, homemaker and mother. Some women are in the labour force; some are mothers and some are not; some are married; others are divorced, single or widowed. Some research does not compare the specific political consequences of these gender roles among women. Such research risks (and unfortunately usually achieves) a biological fallacy. We cannot *assume* that the political behaviour of all women is affected by gender roles in the same ways.[20]

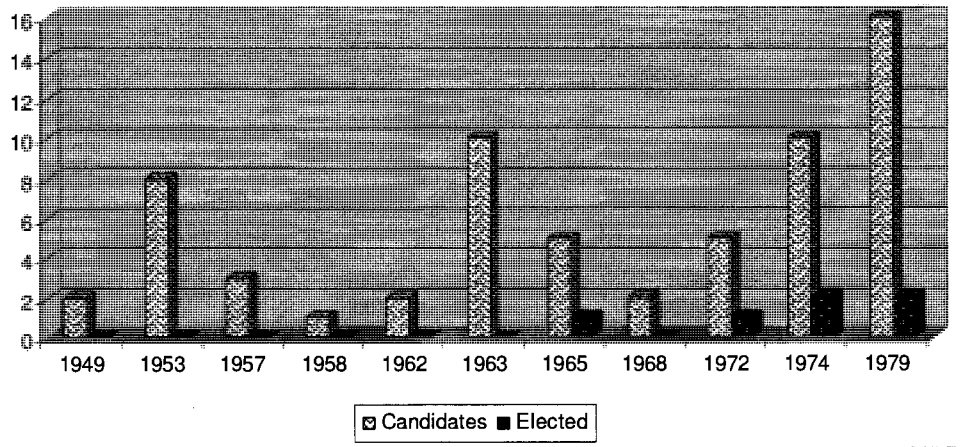
An alternative argument explaining the absence of women in politics is attributable to society's attitudinal discomfort. Many more women run in elections than are actually elected. As Figures 2 and 3 show, significantly more women ran in British Columbia broader spectrum politics than were elected. This finding suggests that women have stood for election but have been turned down by the electorate. By 1979, enough

Figure 2
Women Candidates and Elected Politicians to the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, 1949-1979



[20] Ibid., 79-80.

Figure 3
Women Candidates and Elected Politicians to the House of Commons Representing British Columbia, 1949-1979



women were running for office to fill 46 per cent of the seats available in the provincial legislature and 57 per cent of the seats available to British Columbia in the House of Commons. Numbers such as these have either remained consistent or improved since 1980.

Although it is a source of optimism to feminist scholars that more women have become involved in politics in general, they have never procured more than one third of the available positions for any length of time. According to Brodie's sample, "[t]here are 15% more mothers among municipal than legislative candidates" and "41% of the municipal candidates were homemakers at the time of their first campaign compared to 26% of the legislative candidates."[21] Gidengil and Vengrof found that in Quebec between 1985 and 1995, "women are most likely to have achieved a council presence in the smallest cities, with 92 per cent of the cities with a population of less than 2,000 having at least one female council member. Close

[21] Ibid., 84-85.

behind, however, are the largest cities, with 90 per cent having at least a minimal female council presence."[22] Women in Quebec have only constituted 8.7 per cent of mayors.[23] They do not suggest that this difference has much significance, however, other than perhaps being an indication of council size. Most Quebec municipal councils have at least one woman; however, Gidengil and Vengrof argue that "women councillors almost never have the opportunity to act as a majority."[24] And this is also true in other provinces as well.

In British Columbia, women have had the majority on a municipal council only once. Four of the six council seats as well as the mayor's chair were filled by women in the 1994 New Westminster council.[25] But this was a rare occurrence. Although women had been involved sporadically across all levels of politics after gaining suffrage, the real increases began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. British Columbia has often been ahead of other provinces in respect to participation rates. Carbert's research found that "[a]ll the provincial legislatures included fewer than 5 per cent women in 1970, with the exception of British Columbia, with nearly 10 per cent of the seats held by women."[26] Similarly in the United States, Susan J. Carroll reports that "[t]he proportion of women among state legislators increased from 4% in 1969 to 15% in 1985. The proportion of mayors and local council members who were women more than doubled from 4% to 10% in the years between 1975 and 1981."[27] In Canada, a similar trend was occurring at the federal level of politics. Brodie's

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[22] Gidengil and Vengroff, 526.
[23] Ibid., 527.
[24] Ibid., 526-527.
[25] City of New Westminster Archives, "Council List."
[26] Carbert, 202.
[27] Susan J. Carroll, "Political Elites and Sex Differences in Political Ambition: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Politics* 47, 4 (1985): 1231-1232.

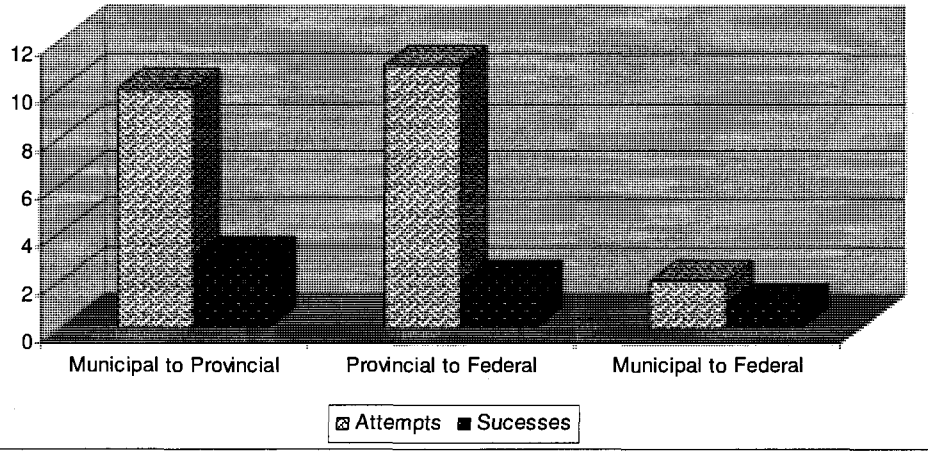
research shows that "in less than twenty years, the percentage of federal candidates who were women increased from 6 per cent in 1972 to 19 per cent in 1988. During the same period women increased their representation in the House of Commons from 2 per cent to 13 per cent. Women's political representation in provincial legislatures and territorial assemblies reflects a similar upward trend."[28]

The data compiled on women in British Columbia supports these findings, although the literature has missed other important elements. In all levels of politics, involvement steadily increased between 1950 and 1980 but female participation in municipal politics outstripped broader spectrum levels. The slight decrease in numbers in the early 1960s across all levels might be attributable to the brief recession during these years. British Columbia in the 1960s was booming under W.A.C. Bennett's Social Credit program for economic improvement and regional cohesion, which may have drawn some women away from politics and into the workforce.[29] The statistics in British Columbia do not, however, support the idea that municipal politics was a jumping-off point for women politicians between 1950 and 1980. As Figure 4 demonstrates, very few women made the leap to broader spectrum politics and fewer still were successful. This data takes into account only those women whose careers began between 1950 and 1980, but may have extended up to the present. For example, Iona Campagnolo began her political career municipally in Prince Rupert in 1973, but made the leap to federal politics in 1974 and back to the provincial scene in 2001 in a non-elected capacity as the province's 27th Lieutenant Governor. But her career is quite extraordinary and not representative of all women

[28] Brodie, "Women and Political Leadership," 76.

[29] Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, Revised Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 270-274.

Figure 4
Cross-Reference of British Columbia Women Who Attempted to Win Seats in Other Levels of Government, 1950-1980

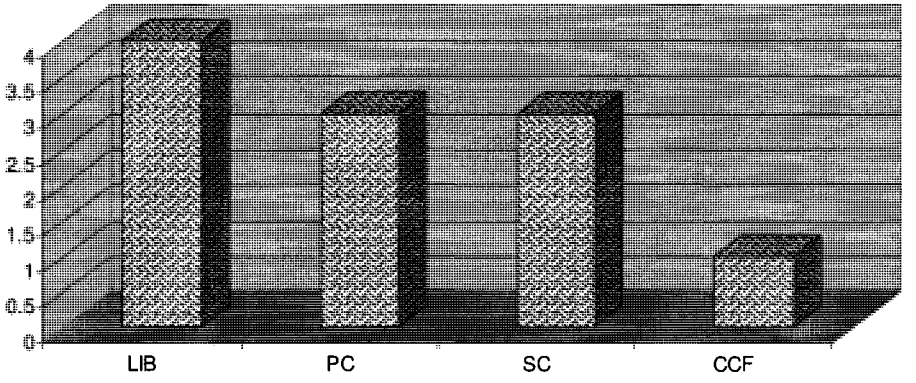


politicians in British Columbia. Significantly, however, none of her brief online biographies mention her short stint in municipal politics, suggesting that success is not measured on a local framework.

Most of the literature refers to women involved in party politics, offering additional analytical tools not available to scholars of municipal politics. Lacking overt party affiliation, where women municipal politicians sit ideologically is difficult to say. Arguably, partisanship can be extrapolated by looking at the numbers of women in broader spectrum parties in Figures 8 and 9. We can also see a small pattern by finding out what parties women went to when they made the leap between levels.[30] In 1979 and 1983, Doreen Lawson ran unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate in a Burnaby riding. Beth Wood also made an attempt to run provincially for the Progressive Conservative (PC) party in 1952. Carrie Jane Gray made known her intentions to run in the 1972 federal election under the PC banner in the Prince George-Peace River riding, but never actually allowed her name to stand.

[30] See Figure 5.

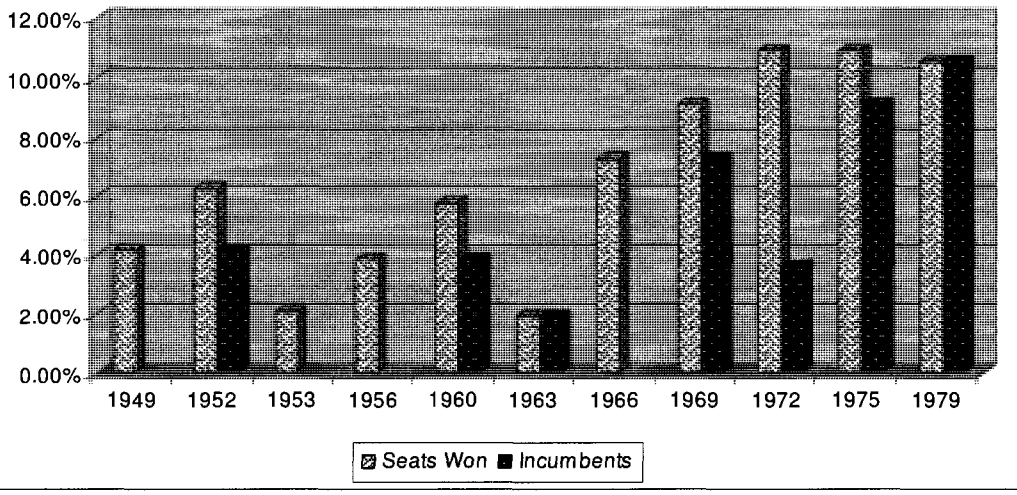
Figure 5
Partisanship of Women from Municipal to Provincial or Federal Politics, 1949-1979



Extrapolating party support in this way garners a better understanding of where women municipal politicians stood on the political compass and allows the historian to examine women's ideological background offering insight into their actions. Women have tended to support parties that would support them, particularly left wing parties such as the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), New Democratic Party (NDP), and Social Credit. Lynda Erickson provides evidence that provinces like British Columbia where the NDP was influential were more amenable to women candidates and encouraged their involvement, particularly in the early 1970s, accounting for a significant rise in women's participation at that time.[31] Without the benefit of partisan politics at the municipal level, it becomes more difficult to place women on the political compass. That we know what parties Wood, Gray, and Lawson stood for in provincial elections illuminates all three as relatively centred on

[31] Lynda Erickson, "Parties, Ideology, and Feminist Action: Women and Political Representation in British Columbia Politics," in *In the Presence of Women: Representation in Canadian Governments*, eds. Jane Arscott and Linda Trimble (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1997), 111 & 114; see Figure 6.

Figure 6
Percentage of Seats Won by Women in British Columbia Provincial Elections, 1949-1979



the compass. Erickson's study reveals that women who aligned themselves with the NDP and other left parties tended to apply greater pressure on party leaders about women's rights.[32] It can be assumed that women in municipal politics who aligned themselves left of centre may have also done so, but on a local standing.

Despite party efforts to encourage women's participation, an explanation as to why women did not achieve more than one third of the seats in any level of government is simple: competition. Gidengil and Vengroff explore one of the greatest barriers to election: male incumbency which checked female representation more "in larger cities where council membership is more desirable."[33] However, incumbency affected male candidates just as heavily. Nevertheless, no matter how little competition there may have been between the sexes, there would still be far fewer women in office simply because fewer women than men ran for office. It must also be

[32] Ibid., 114.
[33] Gidengil and Vengroff, 529.

noted that a few women were also incumbents for several years, like Gray, Wood, and Lawson, who were continually returned to council because their political style was dependable and familiar.

Although there were enough female candidates in British Columbia by 1980 to fill approximately half the seats available in provincial politics, there were still far more men in the running.[34] The general consensus is that women tended to hold office in places where the office was less desirable to men who were seeking out power and prestige.[35] Again, scholars are assuming that women have been more willing to settle for less. Gidengil and Vengrof contend that "[a]t the municipal level, power is a function of city size: the larger the city, the larger the budget, the more power and prestige associated with council membership, and the more significant the decision-making role. This means that elective office will be more desirable in larger cities, and women will face correspondingly more competition from men."[36] Bullock and MacManus offer a different view, stating that smaller councils have stiffer competition for women because there are fewer seats available, and that competition is lowered in areas such as cities where there are more seats available.[37] Hill argues, however, that competition has nothing to do with number of seats available or city size. He states that "female office seekers may encounter stiffer male opposition in states and communities where legislative compensation is greater, tenure longer and

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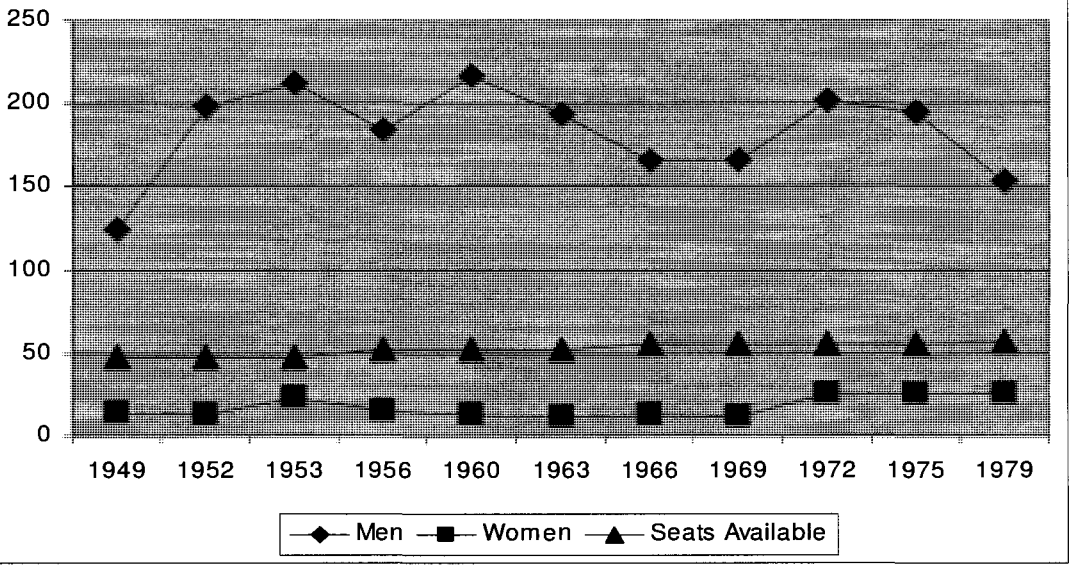
[34] See Figure 7.

[35] Gidengil and Vengroff, 159; Susan Welch and Albert K. Karnig, "Correlates of Female Office Holding in City Politics," *The Journal of Politics* 41, 2 (1986): 488-489.

[36] Gidengil and Vengroff, 516.

[37] Chales S. Bullock and Susan A. MacManus, "Municipal Electoral Structure and the Election of Councilwomen," *The Journal of Politics* 53, 1 (1991): 77.

Figure 7
Women and Men Candidates in Provincial Elections, 1949-1979



the prestige of office-holding higher."[38] The significance of these analyses, however, is not in what the scholars are saying – it is in *how* they are presenting it. Each of these interpretations is framed in such a way to suggest that the race for political power is a male versus female competition, rather than one designed to select the best people for the job.

The three women whose careers play a pivotal role in this thesis built their base of experience as any other member of council would. The only difference was that their family lives were the foundation for that experience. Although Gray, Wood, Lawson, and others like them, gained experience applicable to municipal politics through traditional feminine roles, it is crucial to point out that the organizational learning processes of "civic volunteerism – that typically feminine, unpaid, and therefore 'unprofessional' activity – provides women with alternative experiences for

[38] Hill, 159.

obtaining relevant skills."[39] It was from a diversity of venues that both women and men drew their leadership strengths and were able to apply those skills in similar ways.

Elizabeth Charlotte Hanna was born in Minitonas, Manitoba, on 12 October 1907 to a stock-buyer and his wife.[40] She later attributed the person she was to become to her father, telling reporters that it was because of his "warm and genuine interest in needy people" that she had "inherited the trait and has a love of assisting people who find it difficult or impossible to help themselves."[41] Her mother died when Hanna was only nine years old, leaving her to take care of her father and brother – an early education in responsibility and leadership. Her first attempts at cooking were "biscuits – more like hard tack – and bread which wasn't too bad."[42] She did not "go in for frivolous play" like the other children; Hanna preferred to "concentrate on more serious matters such as caring for wounded farm animals."[43] Her education began in Minitonas, but she moved to Edmonton to attend McDougall High School where she completed grade eleven. Perhaps the experience, both valued and frustrating, was at the root of her seemingly defensive statement "'that you don't have to have a university education if you want to go places.'"[44] Hanna was living back in Manitoba at the Winnipeg YWCA by 1926 and supported herself by working at a department store jewellery counter. As it happened, Jack Wood, accomplished lacrosse player and Native Son of New Westminster, was staying at the YMCA with

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[39] Sharyne Merritt, "Winners and Losers: Sex Differences in Municipal Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 21, 4 (1977): 734.

[40] "Sense of Humor, Too"; "Obituaries," *The British Columbian*, 25 September 1994; "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist in Civic Life," *The Province*, 17 January 1959.

[41] "Sense of Humor, Too."

[42] "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist."

[43] "Sense of Humor, Too."

[44] "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist."

his team where he met "[p]retty dark-haired, blue-eyed Beth." They were married soon after in New Westminster.[45]

After relocating to New Westminster, Wood became increasingly involved in her adopted community while she raised her two children. During their elementary school years, she joined the Herbert Spencer Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for a year between 1944 and 1945.[46] This short stint was enough to convince her that she could make a difference. However, dissatisfied with the PTA's limited reach, Wood became a school board trustee from 1946 to 1948.[47] From that position, she planned and fought for the building of the junior high school.[48] During these years, Wood was also active in the Civilian Mothers' Pension Association and served as vice-president for both the New Westminster Council of Women and the Metropolitan Branch School Trustees.[49] These experiences revealed to Wood that not only did she possess the confidence to run for city office but that council urgently needed a woman's perspective. After all, "When there is any organization work to be done in a big way, such as tag days, clothing drives or taking charge of registering for ration books during the war, the city council did not hesitate to ask the help of the Women's Council—women can do with a voice on the council."[50] Disgruntled with being handed piecemeal "women's work," Wood opined that if women were expected to help when needed, they should have a place on the council. Believing that she was

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Notes for *The British Columbian* in clippings file, City of New Westminster Archives, no date.

[47] Ibid.; "Obituaries," *The British Columbian*.

[48] Aldermanic Candidate's Advertisement, *The British Columbian*, 9 December 1948.

[49] Aldermanic Candidate's Advertisement, *The British Columbian*, 9 December 1948; "Candidates Make First Appearance," *The British Columbian*, 7 December 1948.

[50] "Candidates Make First Appearance."

just the woman for the job, Wood successfully stood for election with her first attempt in December of 1949.

Doreen Anne Fowler was born in Vancouver in 1928, but her family soon moved to Burnaby when she was only a few months old.[51] Her father was a labourer who raised chickens and pheasants as both a hobby and an income supplement.[52] When Fowler was older, they moved to County Line in Langley Prairie in 1944, where she attended T. J. Trapp Technical High School.[53] Recalling her school days, when she was sixteen she "hung around with a 'gang' of kids," including Edward Lawson, her future husband. However, her "Mother became very ill and unhappy [...] so we moved to a seven acre plot in Burquitlam."[54] The following year, Fowler began a series of jobs that led her into local politics. Starting in the offices of the Vancouver Branch of the Mutual Life Assurance Company of Canada in 1946, she later moved on to Collister's store in New Westminster, and then to BC Electric (later BC Hydro) where she eventually became the office union representative. After attending a conference for the BC Trade Union Congress (now BC Federation of Labour) in the early 1950s, she was the first woman and the youngest member elected to one of the seven vice president's positions.[55] She married Edward Lawson who, in the early 1950s, left his job as a truck driver to become a business agent for the Teamster's Union and, years later, was named to the Canadian Senate.[56]

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[51] *Burnaby Centennial Anthology: Stories of Early Burnaby* (Burnaby, BC: City of Burnaby, 1994), 484.

[52] Ibid., 484-485.

[53] Ibid., 485.

[54] Ibid., 485.

[55] Ibid., 485.

[56] Ibid., 485. Edward M. Lawson was appointed to the Canadian Senate by Prime Minister Pierre Eliiot Trudeau on 7 October 1970 and remained a senator until resigning on 24 September 2004 after almost 34 years of service. See also Parliament of Canada, "Lawson, The Hon. Edward M.,"

Doreen Lawson's extensive political career did not seem at first to be the result of a conscious decision. Rather, in hindsight it was the product of a succession of steps dedicated to addressing what she saw as an extensive problem in Burnaby. Over the years, she became involved in various projects and associations: the Brentwood Park Elementary School PTA; chair and president for the Burnaby United Way Board of Directors; a member of the board of directors with United Community services of the Greater Vancouver Area; and a member of the Burnaby Centennial Committee. Her true passion, however, was fighting for environmental protection, particularly in the Burnaby Lake watershed. Lawson said she "was an environmentalist in the years when mention of the word invariably resulted in a chuckle or a sneer. Fortunately, the mayors and members of Burnaby Council, staff (especially the Planner and the Planning Department), and the electorate were receptive to my environmental projects."[57] Although she had enjoyed visiting the lake as a child, her concerns did not take shape until 1954 when she and her family moved into a new subdivision on Westlawn Drive. When their basement flooded, she was "appalled" to learn from a municipal worker they were living over a stream that had been piped and levelled, and that nearby Willingdon Park was once a garbage filled ravine treated in the same way.[58] Thus began a ten-year campaign to clean up and save the lake, its inhabitants, and its tributaries from destruction by the effects of expanding urban development.

Library of Parliament, http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Files/Parliamentarian.aspx?Item= b639f696-5f6d-4f8f-8357-8f923dd168f4&Language=E&Section= FederalExperience, accessed on 31 January 2008.

[57] Biography of Doreen Lawson, located in "The Doreen Lawson Collection," record ID 2003-30, City of Burnaby Archives, 3.

[58] *Burnaby Centennial Anthology*, 485.

Lawson credits Jack Wasserman, a Vancouver reporter, with the inspiration for her most important environmental work, for it was Wasserman who "needled me about pollution in Burnaby Lake and asked why a certain Parks and Recreation Commissioner didn't do something about it. That challenge lived on for over twenty five years."[59] Recognizing Lawson's penchant for working on behalf of the environment, Reeve Alan Emmott asked Lawson to serve on the Parks and Recreation Commission in 1965. Her work on the commission earned her the chairmanship from 1969 until 1971.[60] Pollution from the surrounding urban and industrial areas killed many of the waterfowl that lived at the lake. Abolished in 1964, the game reserve laws were the only legal protection for the lake and area. Thanks to Lawson's council proposal, new wildlife sanctuary laws took effect in 1972.[61] Most of this, Lawson accomplished before she finally won a seat (after two failed attempts) on city council in December of 1971 on a platform of environmental protection.[62]

Born in 1912 in Bixby, Oklahoma, Carrie Jane Lines and her family moved to McBride, British Columbia when she was nine months old.[63] Her father worked on the steamboats, moving freight and people up and down the Fraser River.[64] After completing high school, Lines moved to Innisfail, Alberta, where she completed

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[59] Ibid., 487.

[60] Ibid., 486.

[61] In September of 1924, the Burnaby Lake area was officially given status as a game reserve. Before the population and housing boom of the 1950s, the area boasted a wealth of bear, deer, and various waterfowl. Protection of such a resource was important for establishing and regulating proper hunting practices. Forty years later, "because it was then illegal to shoot in the Municipality and regular checks by game authorities were difficult and somewhat unnecessary, Burnaby Lake was declassified as a Game Reserve on August 10, 1964." Burnaby Lake – Statistics and Bibliography. Located in "The Doreen Lawson Collection." Record ID 2003-30, Binder 3-B, City of Burnaby Archives, 11; *Burnaby Centennial Anthology*, 489.

[62] *Burnaby Centennial Anthology*, 489.

[63] Arlene [Gray] Langevin and Nadine Gray, interview with the author, 21 February 2007.

[64] Ibid.

nurse's training.[65] It was here in the early 1930s that she met and married her husband, Henry Douglas Gray. They briefly lived in Jasper, Alberta before moving to Prince George in 1932.[66] Henry Gray's 50-year service with the Canadian National Railways began in 1912 as an apprentice electrician in Transcona, Manitoba, and over the course of his career, he worked as an electrician at every divisional point in the western region.[67] As a result, he was frequently away from his family throughout the year. Unlike Wood or Lawson, Gray became involved in her children's school PTA without any thoughts of public life. But when the school burned down and the city council offered little help, she decided to run for office and try to make a difference. Her drive to learn everything she could about the city and its workings more quickly made up for her lack of experience and set the groundwork for her legacy of practising policy-making like a tax-payer rather than a tax-spender. Her subsequent experiences on council, discussed in further detail throughout this thesis, were what made her a credible and electable politician.

That Wood, Gray, and Lawson accomplished what they did, and on their own terms without the assistance of other female colleagues was remarkable. Assigning importance to an undervalued segment of society's governance is necessary to recover a perspective where the little things matter – not just for the sake of women involved at the local level, but for the men as well. Changing the way we speak and write about municipal politics is the first step. The careers of Wood, Gray, and Lawson provide excellent examples of how women went out and, as individuals,

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.; "Jasper Wedding Is Pretty Event of Wednesday," *Edmonton Journal*, 23 June year unknown, from the private papers of the Gray family.

[67] "Special Pass: CN Honors City Man For 50-Year Service," *The Prince George Citizen*, 1964, from the private papers of the Gray family.

carved out a place for themselves in a pursuit traditionally designated masculine. Although feminism predicated the attitudes that gave them the confidence to enter politics, women like Wood, Gray, and Lawson distanced themselves from feminist thought and movements in order to concentrate on the issues demanding greater attention in their eyes. However, the attention these women received in the media did little to further their interests and made trivial topics such as clothing and hairstyles a focal point. The result was a sugar-coated attempt at easing discomfort of seeing women in traditionally masculine roles, and a way to control responses to feminist thought.

Chapter 1

"Intestinal Fortitude"[1]: Feminism, Equality, and Women in British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980

> "'My thoughts about women in public elected office boil down to what I believe of people in elected office. I don't mind whether it is a man or a woman – as long as the person qualifies, has plenty of ability and plenty of intestinal fortitude.'"[2]
>
> ~ Beth Wood ~

Liberal theorists of the late eighteenth century would have disagreed with Wood that women had the ability to act as political beings. Hobbes and Locke determined that women lacked the "capacity to act as rational, independent and self-governing individuals" and, therefore, "the requisite attributes to participate in political affairs."[3] However, over the next century and a half, increasing numbers of women disagreed. The story of the struggle for gender equality is a familiar one, and there is a growing body of literature on this topic. The continual redevelopment of theoretical concepts such as gender and feminism has transformed the writing about women and history. It evolved from an exploration of the first, the greatest, and the most courageous to a second generation of lesser known women who exemplified a deeper understanding of gender relationships and the struggle for equality. These later women's stories exposed "the often silent and hidden operations of gender that are

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[1] "Former Mayor Passes Away," *The New Westminster Record*, 25 September 1994. From an interview in 1964.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Maureen Mancuso and Richard G. Price, *Leaders and Leadership in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 77.

[...] present and defining forces in the organization of most societies."[4] One way to explore these "hidden operations" is an examination of the relationship between feminism and politics, an approach that historians have seriously undertaken only in the last two decades.[5] In British Columbia, the careers of women like Carrie Jane Gray, Beth Wood, and Doreen Lawson exemplified varying degrees of feminist beliefs reflected in the work they accomplished within their respective communities. Drawing upon diverse community interests, Gray, Wood, and Lawson nonetheless worked towards a common goal of gender equality in their individual careers while, at the same time, they were often pressured to defend their positions as women because of the pervasive misinterpretations of feminism that infiltrated society.

It is necessary to first define such terms as gender, feminism, equality, and even politics because the meanings of these terms change rapidly and are often subjected to differing interpretations. Joan Wallach Scott argues, "precisely when we think we know what a term means, when usage is so commonly agreed upon that meaning need no longer be provided, that new words and new concepts are needed. This is not evidence either of lack of rigor or of intellectual dilettantism; rather it is an attempt to retain the critical edge."[6] Language that at one time had a sharp, narrowly defined (and often radical) meaning, broadened with looser meaning as it permeated societal consciousness. For example, Scott explains how "gender" has in recent years become a familiar synonym "for women, for the differences between the sexes, for

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[4] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 27.

[5] Sylvia Bashevkin, "Political Participation, Ambition and Feminism: Women in the Ontario Party Elites," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 15, 4 (1985): 412.

[6] Scott, xii.

sex," blurring its intended definitional foundation.[7] Perhaps because of these ongoing changes, women in politics did not want to align themselves with a concept that might have appeared "radical" to the public nor one that varied in meaning to different people.

In order to place Gray, Wood, and Lawson into a contemporary definitional cadre, an examination of how these women might have defined these terms is necessary. The term "feminism" itself is tricky because many women did not define themselves as feminists, even though their political careers were built on preceding feminist achievement. Barbara Arneil maintains that feminism is difficult to define simply because of its "amorphous and ever-changing" nature and that "there are so many schools of thought with widely varying views."[8] However, she attempts to contain the chameleon-like term in a few words:

> The recognition that, virtually across time and place, men and women are unequal in the power they have, either in society or over their own lives, and corollary belief that men and women should be equal; the belief that knowledge has been written about, by and for men and corollary belief that all schools of knowledge must be re-examined and understood to reveal the extent to which they ignore or distort gender.[9]

Arneil acknowledges that while this may not be everyone's definition of feminism, it provides a beginning for critical analysis.[10] A much more compelling definition of feminism comes from Estelle B. Freedman:

> Feminism is a belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth. Because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are

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[7] Scott, xii.
[8] Barbara Arneil, *Politics and Feminism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 3.
[9] Ibid., 3-4.
[10] Ibid., 233n7.

> necessary to achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies.[11]

This definition goes beyond the general belief in equality by noting, first, that it is necessary to have a movement to exert social change and, second, that there are other factors such as ethnicity and class challenging gender assumptions at stake. Equally important is Freedman's acknowledgment that she uses feminism to "describe movements whose participants do not necessarily apply that label to themselves."[12]

Freedman's definition is an excellent starting point from which to view the careers of women like Wood, Lawson, and Gray, especially because they did not consider themselves feminist until later in their careers, if at all. Indeed, their disposition towards feminism is fairly representative of other middle class women involved in politics between 1950 and 1980. Theirs' was an era that, in hindsight, came to be associated with a crucial turning point in the United States and the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. The feminist purpose filtered into Canada, triggering the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which, in turn, stimulated the Canadian variant of second wave feminism. After this point, women became increasingly outspoken about the condition of women's rights, and in particular about rates of political involvement. It was in these times of definitional reconstruction that the terms equality and gender began to coalesce into a new and engaging form of feminism.

Across Canada, the interpretation of feminism as a radical and unsuitable political platform caused a frugality of feminist opinion among most women who

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[11] Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 7.

[12] Ibid., 3.

were successful in public life between 1950 and 1980. Freedman suggests that many people steered away from the label because its definition was difficult to pinpoint.[13] No one, especially those in the public eye, wished to associate themselves with "radicalism" and a generally misunderstood movement. The typical, often exaggerated response to feminism, particularly after the mid-1960s was negative: "radical, man-hating, bra-burning, and worse."[14] Thus, it is problematic when historians refer to women involved in politics as feminists not only because of these common attitudes, but because the women themselves did not necessarily refer to themselves as such. Specifically, "[w]hile women may participate in a variety of social movements – civil rights, ecology, socialism, even fundamentalism – those movements cannot be feminist unless they explicitly address justice for women as a primary concern."[15] Clearly, the same could be said of women involved in politics who represented only themselves and their political concerns.

Additionally, the term "feminist" has been used too casually in reference to women in politics, when they only thought of themselves as people, who happened to be of the female sex, working towards a goal of bettering their communities. This does not mean, however, that women's political careers were not influenced by feminism. The maternal feminist ideology prevalent in English Canada at the turn of the twentieth century was still shaping women's involvement in political life half a century later. Women felt that if armed with the vote, they could reform and improve society for the benefit of their children.[16] By mid century, the vote no longer provided

[13] Ibid., 5-6.
[14] Ibid., 10.
[15] Ibid., 7-8.
[16] Bashevkin, 7.

satisfactory access to the processes of political change; running for, and election to, governing bodies did. A commonality that emerges from Gray, Wood, and Lawson's resumes was involvement in the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) as a stepping-stone for entering municipal politics. This is not to say that these women identified themselves with maternal feminism, but the prevailing ideas within this thread of feminist thought may have influenced them. Municipal government provided a springboard for women to make a difference within their communities, which happened to match prescribed maternal feminist roles. For example: Doreen Lawson spent a lifetime working towards saving a dying lake for both ecological and recreational reasons; Carrie Jane Gray's efforts improved the health and safety of local restaurants and she helped create parks for the enjoyment of all citizens; and Beth Wood worked towards a personal goal of broadening the reach of social service programs, specifically providing food for the poor. The endeavours of these women and others like them brought to politics a voice representing the concerns of not just women, but of families wanting better communities in which to grow, learn, and live.

The term "politics" has also undergone continual definitional change. It broadly encompasses "nearly every human grouping where individuals conflict over collective goals and the means by which they resolve those conflicts."[17] Arneil suggests a simple yet effective definition of politics working to encapsulate all incarnations of the term: "the exercise of power, through reason and language, to achieve a particular outcome within a group of people."[18] Her definition opens an enquiry into "not only what occurs in the House of Commons or City Hall but also a

[17] Arneil, 2.
[18] Ibid., 2.

broader sense of politics in society as a whole."[19] Without a standard party system in place, municipal council appears different from other legislative bodies and Arneil's definition is inclusive of all forms of government regardless of size or allotment of power. Perspective, however, complicates women's relationship with politics. Historically, one of the major problems with the academic study of politics was that gender relationships appeared antithetical to politics and political history has excluded women, citing the separate spheres ideology as evidence in support of such a view.[20] However, women's rights movements were inherently a political battle to gain recognition. Different aspects of the women's movement can therefore be thought of as a special interest political viewpoint representing a multitude rather than an individual. Although women involved in both partisan and non-partisan politics might have preferred to be portrayed as representing their individual goals rather than the ambitions of women's groups, the reverse image emerged from the media.

Questions about the definitions of feminism and politics lead naturally to the term gender and its subtleties. If feminism is rooted in the awareness of the equality gap between men and women, then gender is the "knowledge about sexual difference" and the culturally constructed social organization therein.[21] Gender is the cultural construction of the "appropriate roles for men and women."[22] However, one might argue that it also pertains to the clarification of the relationship between men and women. Women's studies scholars introduced gender as an analytical tool to explore the relationship between men and women because the "scholarship focused

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[19] Ibid., 2.
[20] Scott, 34 & 46; Arneil, 5.
[21] Scott, 2.
[22] Ibid., 2.

too narrowly and separately on women" alone.[23] Gender's continual usage as a synonym for women and women's studies contributes to the misconception that it is only about roles while blunting gender's "critical edge", thus transforming it into "a polite euphemism for 'sex.'"[24] By suggesting that gender is more about the roles men or women play in society, compartmentalization of the sexes is perpetuated. Understanding gender relationships is particularly important when studying women in municipal politics because their lives as traditional wives and mothers and their political careers intertwined much more tightly. Therefore, it is more difficult to extract their personal lives from their professional lives, especially in reference to media depictions.

Involvement on committees such as the PTA and other community programs enabled women like Gray, Wood, and Lawson to bridge their family and leadership interests. It did not seem to matter if women had personal feminist convictions or not. They entered municipal politics primarily as concerned citizens; however, the way in which the press, and occasionally their colleagues, represented these women made gender roles an issue. Equality is the means of ignoring "'differences for a particular purpose or particular context'; it represents a social agreement to consider obviously different people as equivalent for a stated purpose."[25] For this reason, Mayor Garvin Dezell gave Carrie Jane Gray advice along these lines when she first took office in January 1952. Dezell told her that "there would be no throwing my weight around because I was a female. I got on the council, so I could just forget my sex. It was

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[23] Ibid., 29.
[24] Ibid., xii, 200.
[25] Mancuso and Price, 77.

good advice, and I think it set me off on the right track.'"[26] Although risking misinterpretation that as mayor he did not want to deal with feminist issues within council, Dezell's advice might also have been evidence of his wanting to see Gray get an equal opportunity at something that has traditionally been a man's game. Reflecting on his father's professional relationship with Gray, Clifford Dezell believed that his father "didn't have a problem with the fact that she was a woman. On occasion he found her difficult just because [...] of their personalities."[27] Mayor Dezell found her to be "feisty," to have very firm opinions, and was occasionally not easy to get along with; he "viewed her as a member of council that he had to work with. It was rare in those days for a woman to get elected, to any level of government, local or provincial or federal. Prince George voters over the years have tended to elect people primarily on character issues."[28] Clifford Dezell stated that over the course of his own forty-year career in Prince George politics that the people in that city did not vote on a gender basis when the opportunity arose.[29] Equality is about more than equal treatment; it is about the freedom to make autonomous choices without regard to class, ethnicity, or gender.

With this definitional groundwork in place, it is much easier to see how women involved in municipal politics seemed to marginalize gender relationships and differences in order to make a difference in their communities. Feminists and non-feminists alike avoided the topic of women's rights not only to advance their political careers, but also to demonstrate they were equals. A similar response occurred at the

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[26] "Gray Claims She's Better than Anyone for Job of Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1957.

[27] Clifford Dezell, interview with the author, 12 April 2007.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

broader spectrum levels as well. Lisa Young argues that "[n]ot all women are feminists, and many women involved in partisan politics would object to the idea that their political involvement is best understood as related to feminist efforts to reform political parties. Nonetheless, changes in the role of women inside political parties coincided with the rise of modern feminism."[30] Patterns of interest among women in parliament are as "diverse as agriculture, prison reform, transportation and human rights," and although a few have supported women's issues most prefer to address local interests and needs.[31] Women in politics and other public professions who considered themselves feminists seemingly made the deliberate decision to downplay their beliefs in order to maintain fellowship and equality. Bertha Wilson is one such example. She disapproved of using her position as Queen's Counsel to advance women's rights, arguing that "'[i]f I went around making speeches and displaying a bias, it would make me totally useless as a judge.'"[32] There is evidence of similar attitudes among the women involved in municipal politics between 1950 and 1980. In a study on women council members in Connecticut, Susan Gluck Mezey argued that "'women may be more influenced by their roles as politicians than by their roles as women or supporters of feminist positions.'"[33] Specifically, "women's 'roles as politicians are determined – at least in part – by their political environment, and it

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[30] Lisa Young, *Feminists and Party Politics*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 11.

[31] Jill McCalla Vickers and M. Janine Brodie, "Canada," in *The Politics of the Second Electorate: Women and Public Participation: Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Spain, West Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Eastern Europe, USSR, Japan*, eds. Joni Lovenduski and Jill Hills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 73.

[32] Sharon Carstairs and Tim Higgins, *Dancing Backwards: A Social History of Canadian Women in Politics*, (Winnipeg: Heartland Associates, 2004), 194. For additional information on Bertha Wilson, see Ellen Anderson, *Judging Bertha Wilson: Law As Large As Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[33] Susan A. MacManus, "A City's First Female Officeholder: 'Coattails' for Future Female Officeseekers?" *The Western Political Quarterly* 34, 1 (1981): 95n21.

may be the institutional setting which attenuates or negates the feminist attitudes of women politicians.'"[34] Her data supports the idea that women, despite personal opinions, "avoid strong public positions on feminist issues."[35]

Women running for municipal office in British Columbia also preferred to distance themselves from feminism and women's rights issues. Prior to second wave feminism, many women and men dissociated themselves from it in order to remain electable in the public eye. As Freedman points out, "[w]omen may be acceptable as equals, but feminists are often seen as frightening, threatening, or simply unnecessary."[36] The evidence lies in how women presented themselves as politicians to the public that elected them. It was important for them not to come across as feminists, although Wood, Lawson, and Gray all underscored sexual equality to differing degrees.

Wood dismissed any claims that she was a feminist by stressing the importance of motherhood. The best way to do this was through the press and thus when Wood took the mayor's seat in New Westminster in 1959, *The Province* reported that "Royal city mayoress no feminist in civic life." Yet she was active in and supported the Council of Women throughout her life and political career and said that the mayor's chair "is neither feminine nor masculine. It is for the human being with the ability."[37] When she won the mayor's seat, Wood received a congratulatory letter from Carrie Jane Gray, then mayor of Prince George, along with a few words of

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[34] Ibid., 95n21.
[35] Ibid., 95.
[36] Freedman, 7-8.
[37] "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist."

wisdom – that the "'mayor's chair was a lonely one.'"[38] Misinterpreting Gray's intent, Wood told reporters: "'[b]ut it's not. I don't believe in the battle of sexes. There is room for both. There should be no jealousy between the sexes.'"[39] Rather, Gray had meant that only one person can be mayor at a time, and whether you were a man or a woman, it was important to remain strong and not to renege when pressured to do so. Nevertheless, Wood's response was quick and succinct, allaying any fears the public might have that she was a feminist. In order to emphasize her stance on women's involvement outside the home, Wood used the opportunity to present her views. She asserted that "'[m]otherhood is still the greatest end for a woman [...] The Lord put us on this earth for that and beyond that, when women have raised their families, or are unfortunate enough not to have any, they can apply themselves to the problems of the world.'"[40] Coming from a strong maternal feminist perspective, this comment could have been construed as a slight towards Gray because she had her fifth child a year after becoming alderman in 1951without ceasing her work on council. Wood's belief in equality is questionable for, from that perspective, the freedom to choose one path over another was not optional – women had to accept biological reality beyond all else.

Wood's opinions differed from Gray and Lawson's about being able to balance family with outside activities. Quoted in the *Prince George Citizen* when first elected to council in 1951, Gray said that "'Women are affected by taxation and by every law the city passes, and I think they should have a part in these matters. [...] I

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

do not believe that the only good ideas are confined to the male mind.'"[41] When the Status of Women Report came out in 1970, Gray told a reporter that the report was of little personal importance to her – she believed that women will do anything they want to and that "women belonged everywhere that men did."[42] At the same time, Gray also recognized the lack of respect for women in politics by saying that "'the three women cabinet ministers without portfolio [are] "chore boys" dressing as dance hall girl[s] for Centennial functions.'"[43] Although these women were climbing the political ladder, they were not being given any more responsibility than society housewives. Gray's criticism drew attention to the devaluing of the work the women had done to get to that position, even if they were "without portfolio." This general attitude towards women in politics may have rankled with Gray, but she still did not consider herself a feminist. According to her daughters,

> She considered herself to be a regular, ordinary mother of children, woman of the city who went into politics. She believed that women should keep their independence and certainly get out and vote when they could. And, you know, she was very adamant about that whole voting business. Very adamant. But [we] would not say she considered herself to be a feminist."[44]

Gray did not agree with the "segregating [of] men and women [... She] went into politics because she wanted to, not because she was a woman."[45] Still, given Freedman's definition of feminism and the possibility that women acting in such a role actually disavowed such labels, Gray's career certainly bore the marks of a feminist perspective.

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[41] "Two Women Contest Aldermanic Vacancy," *The Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1951.

[42] Nikki Moir, "Carrie Jane Gray: A Legend in Her Own Time," *The Province*, 16 October 1971; Langevin and Gray, interview.

[43] Moir.

[44] Langevin and Gray, interview.

[45] Ibid.

In explaining the reasons why she chose to become involved with the city, Lawson told *The Burnaby Examiner* that "'[b]efore I got married I was first vice president of the B.C. Federation of Labour [...] Eleven years ago we moved to Burnaby. I tried to stay home with the baby but I had been active before marriage,' she shrugged."[46] To help fill the time, Lawson "[yearned] to be active in the community" so she joined a golf club, went to art school, and taught a charm and good grooming class for teens.[47] Beginning her career and most important environmental work just prior to the second wave of feminism in Canada, Lawson told reporters when appointed to the Burnaby Parks and Recreation Commission in 1967 that she went into it "[n]ot to give a feminine point of view, but her point of view."[48] Like the others, Lawson put an equalist spin on her statement, steering away from any feminist undertones. Journalists played up her role as housewife, perhaps as a way to make her appear less threatening to the public. The newspaper reported that "[w]hen Mrs. Lawson isn't busy as a parks and recreation commissioner she takes on the role of homemaker. 'But I don't like dishes,' she confined [*sic*]. On the weekends she goes golfing with her husband Ed and attends various activities involved with his job."[49] In comparison with Wood and Grey, however, the press seemingly took Lawson more seriously and accepted her opinions at face value. This is not to say that the media did not respect Wood and Gray per se, but by the early 1970s, more women were involved in local politics and it was no longer unusual to see at least one woman on council. However, despite the diversity of opinions and tactics, these three women

[46] "Feminine View Out," *The Burnaby Examiner*, 26 October 1967.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

managed to circumvent declarations of feminist notions by suggesting that neither biological sex nor culturally constructed gender roles were at stake: ability, desire, and competency were. They were people with the ability to make changes to their communities who happened to be female.

Women in Canadian politics frequently suppressed the notion that they were feminists and attempted to make it clear that women were as equal to the task as men. Beginning her political career in the 1930s, Grace Winona MacInnis put voice to a tenet that came to represent the personal attitudes of future political women: "'The first thing any man or woman needs in the line of liberation, [...] is to be liberated from the notion that they are just a man or just a woman ... there is something much better than being either and that's being a full human being.'"[50] For her part, Gray confidently conveyed this message in a radio broadcast during her first election campaign for mayor of Prince George: "'I hadn't intended to speak on the subject of my sex or occupation [as a housewife] in my campaign for the position of mayor of your city, the reason being that, male or female, farmer or merchant, I am better equipped for the job than any you've had in nearly ten years [....] If it is no job a woman can do, why does it take so many stalwart men to try to outsmart her?'"[51] Gray preferred to be known as someone who represented the whole population of the

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[50] Grace Winona MacInnis, interview with Susan Walsh, 18 November 1981, quoted in Susan Walsh, "The Peacock and the Guinea Hen: Political Profiles of Dorothy Gretchen Steeves and Grace MacInnis," in *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women,* eds. Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), 86. MacInnis was an influential politician in British Columbia with the CCF and NDP with a strong family background in politics. She was an MLA from 1941-1945, an MP from 1965-1974, and winner of the "Person's Award" in 1979. For further information, see Ann Farrell, *Grace MacInnis: A Story of Love, Courage and Integrity* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1994).

[51] "Gray Claims She's Better than Anyone for Job of Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1957.

city, rather than just a portion of it.[52] She believed that she was "'as energetic and as bright as any man who has hit the horizon.'"[53] Her statement also ties particularly well into the assumed normalcy of men being especially suited to public life, a topic addressed later in Chapter Two.

When Harold Moffat became mayor in 1970, a situation arose testing Gray's patience with the slow pace of gaining equality. When she questioned Moffat in council as to why he was not appointing women to the various civic committees, he replied that "'[a]s long as I'm on council there won't be any women on committees. [...] In all my years on the school board, the women members didn't contribute anything. [....] We'd all be better off if women stayed home and did the dishes.'"[54] Gray responded in her usual blunt way that "'[y]ou're supposed to be forward-looking but you're insular ... and bigoted. [...] You're behind the times.'"[55] At the next council meeting, 36 angry women crowded into the city council's public gallery to protest the mayor's statements.[56] Forced to explain himself further, he told council that he "'always thought women could give us good advice on problems, like, say, alcoholism. But when it comes to investment ... or recreation, that's men's business.'"[57] The influence of maternal feminism is apparent in Moffat's statement, but having been stated in the same year as the release of the Status of Women report, the remark appeared antiquated to Gray and other women of Prince George. Moffat refused to bend in regard to his opinion about women and Gray said of him, "'he's

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[52] "11 Candidates Wait for Voters," *The Prince George Citizen*, 11 December 1964.
[53] Bob Graves, "Candidates Make Last Bid," *The Prince George Citizen*, 10 December 1970.
[54] "Angry Ald. Gray Calls Mayor Bigot," *The Prince George Citizen*, 8 July 1970.
[55] "Angry Ald. Gray Calls Mayor Bigot."
[56] Kathy Hassard, "Go Wash Dishes, Mayor Tells Women," *The Vancouver Sun*, 16 July 1970.
[57] "Mayor Unfazed by Lady Birds," *The Prince George Citizen*, 14 July 1970.

not the man his father was and I've told him so. A. B. Moffat signed my papers when I was first nominated for alderman. He even helped me plan my campaign.'"[58] Regardless, Moffat maintained, "'[w]omen are too slow to come to decisions.'" [59] The *Citizen's* office received several letters from local women in response:

> Surely the Mayor's office should have no room for petty prejudice which belongs to the dark ages. The size of this city warrants room only for good judgment, tolerance, humility, magnanimity and a person with good intellect and good taste. [....] Future elections of Mayor and alderman should include more nominations from aggressive, clear headed, controlled, intelligent women. In Prince George there are many such women who have worked hard to mold the tone of this society and I would suggest the remarks from our Mayor to be extremely untimely, unwise, bigoted and not in keeping with the views of intelligent, thinking, voting women of this city.
>
> (Mrs.) Barbara Hughes[60]

> With reference to Mayor Moffat's recent remarks regarding the role of women. If Mr. Moffat were a more perceptive man, he would be aware that necessity, or evolution, is forcing woman out of her traditional role, and into the marketplace. There is, after all, a direct link between women with their hands in the dish pan and over-population. [....] The family will not go, but if we are to survive in any good way, it must be controlled. After all, we can hardly point the finger at the Asian countries, and continue to breed like rabbits ourselves ... if the family is reduced, as it must be, then the abilities and energies of women must be directed elsewhere.
>
> [....] Men and women have worked in partnership since the beginning of recorded time, sometimes uneasily but for the most part wholeheartedly. If we are to be worthy of this earth we call our own, then we must look forward to a continuing partnership, and make it one designed to deal with today's problems. Any other course is unworthy of our joint responsibility.
>
> Katherine M. Clarke[61]

> I like Mayor Moffat, and I do think all the women in this community should take his advice i.e. stay home and do the dishes – at least for a couple of weeks; the results would be fascinating. By such action as the Mayor suggests I bet we could effectively slow down industry; close up City Hall, hospitals, schools, welfare services; and create bedlam in doctors' offices, the courts, recreational programs, the post office, small businesses and in

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[58] Hassard; "Two Women Contest Aldermanic Vacancy," *The Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1951.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Read On Mr. Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 10 July 1970.

[61] "Moffat Rebuked," *The Prince George Citizen*, 14 July 1970.

> volunteer services. But again, I also think that women are too responsible to actually take the mayor up on his suggestion, and it appears a good thing we are.
>
> Jacklyn Bate[62]

These letters support Scott's assertion that politics did affect the home and that women's historical exclusion was because the private sphere appeared apolitical.[63] The situation between Gray and Moffat exemplified the fears that feminist thought inspired throughout society when women stepped outside of their traditional roles. Feminism, or the "women's movement," as an ideology had often confronted ostensibly insurmountable opposition from Western society. The requirement of retaining a face of radicalism in feminism through its redefinition has given society the impression that it is single-focused.[64] The fear was that it would displace traditional hegemony between men and women resulting in the deconstruction of gender identities and the inevitable failure of nuclear families. Mezey builds on this idea, arguing that the "stereotyped image of the career woman suggests that she neglects the home and its inhabitants and therefore engenders resentment and hostility."[65] Not until much later did Moffat reflect on why he thought the way he did. He said that "it was his thinking that as women spent less time in the home with their families, there were more problems with society. He began to equate women's involvement in full-time employment with the downfall of society."[66] By not appointing women to civic committees, Moffat believed women would return to

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Scott, 34 & 46.

[64] Freedman, 5-6; Alexandra Z. Dobrowolsky, *The Politics of Pragmatism: Women, Representation, and Constitutionalism in Canada* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

[65] Susan Gluck Mezey, "Does Sex Make a Difference? A Case Study of Women in Politics," *The Western Political Quarterly* 31, 4 (1978): 494.

[66] Valerie Giles, *Harold Moffat and the Northern Hardware: Prince George Icons* (Prince George: PressForward, 2006), 117-118.

their homes, simultaneously solving all the ills of society while washing the dishes. Contradictorily, Moffat's statement also suggests that he could not (or would not) use his position as a politician to solve society's problems, that it was not his jurisdiction, thereby increasing the political burden within the home.

Perhaps because of incidences such as the Gray/Moffat quarrel, women already involved in politics became even more motivated to encourage others to participate. Many women in municipal politics took up the cause, not necessarily as feminists, but as women asking other women to take advantage of their political rights as human beings. In British Columbia, Gray first ran for alderman of Prince George in an attempt to get "housewives represented in city affairs," and to incite more interest in politics among women.[67] When she ran for mayor five years later, she argued that having only business men in office did not make much sense:

> It has been said that it should be only a business man for mayor. Now what on earth difference does that make? It doesn't make for balanced thinking to have only business men on the council or as mayor. A business man has a one-track mind. His business is all that he has time to think about. If he tries anything else, one or both suffer. He isn't equipped for anything else. All his life, he has had someone to lean on for other things: first, his mother, then his wife, his stenographer or clerks or accountants. But rarely, oh rarely, all on his own.[68]

A comment such as this suggests that Gray believed that anyone could bring any type of experience to politics, whether it was as a housewife, nurse, or teacher. Ten years later, Lawson was making similar arguments in Burnaby while adding that she strongly believed that women should only advocate those issues for which they were passionate. "I would encourage women to get involved in the community...But, in the

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[67] "Prince George Gets First Woman Alderman," *The Prince George Citizen*, 17 December 1951; "Two Women Contest Aldermanic Vacancy."

[68] "Gray Claims."

community aspect they are interested in. I don't think they should go into a field if they feel inadequate, they should be happy with the results of their work."[69] Fifteen years later, she refined her perspective:

> As more women take their places in the professions and industrial-type jobs, as more women become more competent, it will be easier for them to become involved in politics [....] In the future, women won't be simply filling nurturing or caring roles (in politics.) They'll be relating their backgrounds in computers, accounting or engineering – wherever they gain expertise.[70]

Lawson's vision for the future of women's involvement in politics was to move away from maternal feminist ideals as the impetus and that as more women became familiar with technological advances on the same level as men, their progress in politics would appear natural.

While disavowing the feminist label, Gray, Wood, and Lawson worked towards the goal of gender equality by concentrating on their own interests and demonstrating that they were equal to the task. Only under certain circumstances, would they defend their positions as women politicians and rectify any feminist misconstructions directed at them. Even so, when they were called upon to defend women's rights to be in council, the differences in response were striking. Gray spoke up for the rights of women in political positions several times over the course of her career; Wood extolled the virtues of motherhood to the near detriment of the women's movement; and Lawson was outspoken about encouraging more women to become involved in the capacity in which they were interested. These women, and many others like them, with help from media representations, distanced themselves from radical definitions of feminism because they appeared less like they had an axe

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[69] "Feminine View Out."
[70] "Women in Politics Have to Work Harder," *Burnaby Today*, 21 March 1983.

to grind and thus less threatening to the public. The feminist agenda, particularly before the release of the Status of Women Report, may have also seemed unmanageable in comparison to the work they were already doing in their communities. However, by reflecting on the different definitions of feminism, gender, and equality, and from our perspective in the present, it becomes clear that these women were indeed feminists, despite their efforts to distance themselves from such labels. These women's attitudes to do so were the products of their times. As issues such as the one between Harold Moffat and Carrie Jane Gray suggest, it was important to these women to defend women's political rights as the need arose, but it was equally important to be recognized as being just as capable as any man to be able to balance politics with other responsibilities. All three of these women were qualified, had the ability, and exhibited plenty of "intestinal fortitude."

Chapter 2

"Feminine in Appearance if Not in Occupation"[1]: Women, Media Representation, and Construction of a Public Image in British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980

> "'I believe it's not so much one's sex, but one's intelligence, initiative and ability that counts.'"[2]
>
> ~ Beth Wood ~

Making a difference through political avenues is not just about involving oneself in community affairs. For politicians in general there is awareness that they are role models for the rest of society, not just in how they contribute to the community, but also in how they conduct themselves in their private lives. But for women, particularly after World War Two, there was added pressure to maintain an image of familial comfort and harmony because they were considered the keepers of the hearth. Carrie Jane Gray's daughters, Arlene Langevin and Nadine Gray described it as a "fishbowl" effect. They were contained inside while everyone outside watched, and this was especially so when they were young and still living at home. Langevin recalled that because Prince George was a small town at the time, "people expected me to be a certain way... there was a definite amount of teasing in elementary school. [...C]ertainly I was proud of my mother. [...] But when I got to be a teenager, and a bit older, my behaviour was watched by a lot of people and I wasn't a bad teenager, but on the other hand I wanted to have a private life."[3] What Langevin said next best describes the attitudes people in politics encountered:

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[1] Malanie Buddle, "'You Have To Think Like a Man and Act Like a Lady': Business Women in British Columbia, 1920-80," BC Studies 151 (Autumn 2006): 88.

[2] "Former Mayor Passes Away," *The New Westminster Record*, 25 September 1994.

[3] Arlene Gray Langevin and Nadine Gray, interview with the author, 21 February 2007.

> [Y]ou were expected to be a model. A perfect model. Because at the start of her public life, we were basically to go along with what the concept of what people believed people in politics and their families should be. And Prince George at that time was not [...] laid back or anything. They were very strict and watched every move. And you learned to adapt so that you weren't always in the public eye.[4]

And because municipal politicians work and live close to the people they represent, it is hardly surprising that the pressure to be "a perfect model" never abated. The experiences of Carrie Jane Gray, Beth Wood, and Doreen Lawson suggest there are three common factors involved in constructing an identity for women in politics. First, there is the assertion of femininity in contrast to the purported masculine nature of politics that emerges as a *Victor Victoria* phenomenon. Second, because it is the main access point to people in power, the media becomes an important construction tool and the images portrayed are what take hold in the minds of the people. Third, the politician's family is the key to garnering integrity, responsibility, and stability. Identity-affiliation surfaces by which women in politics were often identified by their husband's careers, especially if the women were listed as housewives. Women in positions of political influence have often been under scrutiny for their looks and home lives rather than their opinions and platforms; this media-induced problem perpetuated ideas that women were easily understood through outside influences such as fashion and family rather than on their merits as politicians, producing a fallacy that continues in the media to the present.

If we were to construct the image of a politically active woman from the perspective of post WWII Canada based on these three women's lives, she would be middle-class, white, family oriented, and smartly dressed. Although an

[4] Langevin and Gray, interview.

oversimplification, the image accords neatly with the ideal that was prevalent in post-WWII Canada. The individual careers of women in politics were diverse, but as media representation demonstrates, there was a subconscious desire to have elected women fall into certain prescriptions of identity. Part of that was trying to make sense of and reconcile perceived gender role differences, which can be described as a "Victor Victoria" phenomenon.[5] It is, in essence, a respectable middle-class woman undertaking a masculine profession and exhibiting masculine behaviour while, at the same time, is required to maintain feminine respectability. Along these lines, Melanie Buddle argued that businesswomen in British Columbia used clothing and manners as a way of getting into business without appearing threatening to their male colleagues.[6] Not surprisingly, similar behaviour occurred with women participating in politics. Women had to sustain a balancing act of two countering images to maintain respectability. Writing about entrepreneurial and professional women in British Columbia, Buddle employs terms that were equally applicable to provincial and municipal politics: "a realm marked by manhood, brotherhood, independence, competition, and aggression – traits not associated with women."[7] Buddle also found that "women attempted to 'avoid the stigma that followed their entry into the male professional space' by stressing their femininity."[8]

Even though many women involved in municipal politics did not consider

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[5] *Victor Victoria* was a 1982 film set in the Depression starring Julie Andrews, James Garner, and Robert Preston about a down-on-her-luck soprano singer whose gay friend convinced her to pretend she was a man who performed as a woman at a nightclub in order to make money. The general plot of the film is not particularly relevant here, but the gender role reversals are. At one point in the film, Victoria Grant (Julie Andrews) confessed to King Marchand (James Garner): "I find it all really fascinating. I mean, there are things available to me as a man that I could never have as a woman. I'm emancipated ... I'm my own man, so-to-speak."

[6] Buddle, 95.

[7] Ibid., 72-73.

[8] Ibid., 72-73.

themselves feminists, onlookers may have thought differently. Observers could have construed women's actions as being feminist because they stepped outside of their prescribed boundaries and launched careers in a field formerly reserved for men. According to Estelle B. Freedman, being associated with feminism had an unwanted side effect: "The recurrent caricatures of feminists as 'mannish' reveal an anxiety that feminism is somehow antithetical to femininity, that to embrace its politics is to reject a gender identity that many women and men wish to preserve."[9] Consequently, some women, and arguably Carrie Jane Gray, Beth Wood, and Doreen Lawson, entered the public eye while preferring to maintain their femininity rather than appear "mannish;" they were already compromising their femininity enough by choosing to engage in what had once been considered men's business.

To help soothe society's fears, women's reaction was to emphasize their feminine attributes through "middle-class traits of respectable womanhood."[10] They did this by maintaining a respectable appearance and by living their lives in an acceptable manner. Part of the reason for the "mannish" image that accompanied feminism in later years was attributable in part to the image of the New Woman that emerged before World War One (WWI). The New Woman "defiantly sport[ed] sturdy shoes and 'mannish' suits and clandestinely smok[ed] cigarettes;" after WWI, the 'New Woman' was "metamorphosed in the 20s into the 'flapper.' Uncorsetted and flouting [*sic*] her short skirts and boyishly bobbed hair, this 'breezy, slangy, informal' creature raced about in cars, drank and smoked openly, wore make-up, and

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[9] Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 11.

[10] Buddle, 74-75.

danced the Charleston till all hours."[11] This image of women adopting coarse habits became associated with feminism and persisted in the social consciousness even though many women did not adhere to those fashion fads. As Buddle points out, "[b]etween 1920 and 1980, businesswomen stressed their femininity by emphasizing their roles as mothers or wives, by heeding their personal appearance, by acting 'lady-like,' and by consciously stressing the ways in which they were softer, more feminine than, and thus different from, their male counterparts in business."[12] Similar responses were seen in political life; women countered the masculine conception of feminism and feminist action by emphasizing femininity through their fashion choices and families. Although women in politics wanted to build professional relationships built on equality, Maureen Mancuso and Richard G. Price argue that women had been "forced to demonstrate their difference from men as a rationale for their entry into political leadership," turning attention away from the real issue of "women's virtual exclusion from the exercise of political power."[13] Equality was being undermined by the *Victor Victoria* phenomenon; emphasizing differences masked the very ideals women were trying to achieve – acceptance and credibility.

Masculine attitudes and behaviours were the standard characteristics women in politics were compared to, without taking into consideration they had their own attributes to offer. Ellen Louks Fairclough, MP, was told many times that she "thought like a man" and she took it as a compliment, while making it "clear to

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[11] Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson, eds., *No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s to 1960s* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990), 343.

[12] Buddle, 95.

[13] Maureen Mancuso and Richard G. Price, *Leaders and Leadership in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 84.

anyone who asked that she was not a feminist."[14] Fairclough told *Weekend Magazine* in 1958 that "'men think it's a compliment when they say "she thinks like a man." I accept it as the compliment they intend. But sometimes I wonder if they would feel flattered if a woman said admiringly, "He thinks like a woman."'"[15] Where some comments may have been intended as compliments, others were born out of nescience and only muddied the picture. When Carrie Jane Gray was first elected mayor of Prince George, there was some confusion over what to call her. Terms such as "Mrs. Mayor" or "Mayoress" referred to the Mayor's wife traditionally, and thus seemed unacceptable. The *Prince George Citizen* asked Gray her preference in the matter. She said that "she had not probed very deeply into that particular phase of protocol but recalled that Charlotte Whitton, the former mayor of Ottawa, insisted on the masculine gender. 'What's good enough for Charlotte, is good enough for me.'"[16] If "Mrs. Mayor" or "Mayoress" were unacceptable, then "Mr. Mayor" and "His Worship" would have been downright confusing to the public. Shortly thereafter, an announcement in the paper stated that "Mayor Carrie Jane Gray will be designated Her Worship, which sounds a lot better than His Worship or Mr. Mayor for the only woman mayor in the province."[17] Here, difference had to become acceptable because biological fact was unavoidable. By deciding to use feminine pronouns, the media brought the *Victor Victoria* phenomenon to fruition.

Beth Wood also occasionally faced opposition despite her position as mayor of New Westminster. Evelyn Benson told an anecdote about Wood's run-in with the

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[14] Sharon Carstairs and Tim Higgins, *Dancing Backwards: A Social History of Canadian Women in Politics*, (Winnipeg: Heartland Associates, 2004), 168.

[15] Ibid., 169.

[16] "Ha! It's a Man's World After All," *The Prince George Citizen*, 6 January 1958.

[17] "City Hall News," *The Prince George Citizen*, 15 January 1958.

local business men's club, the Westminster Club, soon after her swearing in as mayor in 1959. Benson recalled that

> it was traditional for the Westminster Club to invite the city council as their guests for dinner and a social get-together. This sort of gave the businessmen a chance to bend the ears of all the aldermen and the mayor about their problems with business and so on. So when she was elected mayor, she showed up. And [...] she was turned back at the elevator. They said "We're sorry, no women are allowed on this floor." And she was turned back and had to go home! She probably was livid, you know. [....] And a lot of people blamed her, saying that she should have known better than to put herself in that position. She'd been around long enough to know, but maybe it was a test, or maybe she just thought they'd make an exception.[18]

Nearly a quarter of a century later, nine-year veteran Surrey alderman Bonnie Schrenk attributed her success in politics to just "barging in and becoming 'one of the old boys club.'" She told a *Burnaby Today* reporter that "'[a] few years ago they tried to be chauvinistic, but I put a stop to that,' Schrenk states baldly. 'I swatted people around the ears a few times. And I showed them I could debate at their level. It's a game of hardball.'"[19] The media's use of language in reporting her statement as "bald" suggested they perceived it as unfeminine. Even into the 1980s there was a general attitude that masculine characteristics were the standard for comparison.

By maintaining a feminine appearance and attitude, women in politics pushed their boundaries by entering a "man's" profession and they won small victories along the way, but the notion that feminism was "mannish" persisted, limiting how far women could push those boundaries.[20] One of the foremost authorities on feminism and gender at the mid-point of the twentieth century, Simone de Beauvoir argued that "if women are to be truly free they only have to make certain choices. First, they must

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[18] Evelyn Benson (nee Sangster), interview with the author, 11 June 2007.
[19] Doug Todd, "Women in Politics Have to Work Harder," *Burnaby Today*, 21 March 1983.
[20] Freedman, 11.

overcome their biology, their bodies, in order to enter the cultural, rational, realm of men; second, women should consider seriously their continued role in the private sphere, most specifically their role as mothers."[21] According to de Beauvoir's early theories, women must forfeit all that is feminine, to become "mannish," in order to be independently successful. Twenty-five years after writing *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir reconsidered her opinions. She told John Gerassi during an interview that

> In writing *The Second Sex* I became aware, for the first time, that I myself was leading a false life, or rather, that I was profiting from this male-oriented society without even knowing it. What had happened is that quite early in my life I had accepted the male values, and was living accordingly. Of course, I was quite successful, and that reinforced in me the belief that man and woman could be equal if the woman wanted such equality. [....] I managed to enter the man's world without too much difficulty. I showed that I could discuss philosophy, art, literature, etc., on "man's level." I kept whatever was particular to womanhood to myself. I was then reinforced by my success to continue. [....] I tended to scorn the kind of woman who felt incapable, financially or spiritually, to show her independence from men. In effect, I was thinking, without even saying it to myself, "if I can, so can they." In researching and writing *The Second Sex* I did come to realize that my privileges were the result of my having abdicated, in some crucial respects at least, my womanhood.[22]

However, this was a sacrifice too great for most women. The victories that women like Wood, Lawson, and Gray accomplished as individuals were the building blocks to the greater victory they made as a group. By balancing both family and political responsibilities, these women forcefully demonstrated that women could maintain their "womanhood" and have a successful career in public and intellectual pursuits. In that way, women in politics helped to further the equality movement, slow as it might

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[21] Barbara Arneil, *Politics and Feminism* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 163-164.

[22] Simone de Beauvoir, interview by John Gerassi, "The Second Sex Twenty Five Years Larer," *Society* (Jan-Feb 1976) Southampton University, copyright 1995 Transaction Publishers, proofed and corrected by Andy Blunden February 2005, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/1976/interview.htm> accessed 6 November 2007.

have been.

There were both negative and positive sides to emphasizing femininity. On a negative note, the media accentuated gender differences by emphasizing women's feminine attributes – both in physical attractiveness and in associated accoutrements. By complimenting their figures, outfits, and looks, the media steered attention away from female politicians' opinions and special interests, something that rarely, if ever, occurred when drawing attention to male politicians. The *Vancouver Sun* took delight in the teasing Wood received from her colleagues when she ran unsuccessfully for the mayoralty of New Westminster in 1954: "The striking Irish brunette, although mother of two grown children, has the figure of a fashion model, and 'the most shapely legs under the council table,' her fellow aldermen teasingly tell her."[23] By making suggestive remarks about Wood, both the media and her colleagues cheapened her public image; it did not seem to matter where she stood on city issues, but she did happen to have the best pair of legs in council. And while the latter may have been true, it would have been an image that remained in the public consciousness longer than her more serious side because it was amusing and appealing to readers. It did not in any way make her appear any more capable than her colleagues for the position of mayor. Again, the media's use of language shaped public opinion. The same article in the *Vancouver Sun* stated that "[d]espite her attractive looks and good sense of humor, Beth Wood is a person to be reckoned with and she will stick to her guns through any council debate."[24] In a backhanded attempt to compliment Wood, the message was instead a warning not to be fooled by her good looks and humour, for

[23] "Sense of Humor, Too: Beth Wood Helps Self – And Others," *The Vancouver Sun*, 7 December 1954.

[24] Ibid.

she was equally stubborn and someone to come up against. The language the media employed often camouflaged a double agenda in frippery. Using fashion and figures as "conspicuous sign-posts set out to proclaim [...] femininity despite [their] type of business" ran the risk of backfiring by making women appear vain and easily appeased by flattery.[25]

However, the positive side was that this kind of emphasis made them appear less threatening to their colleagues and to the public. The image put forth by the media and by female politicians was that of being respectable, feminine, and progressive without being radical or threatening. The most effective way to assert femininity in a masculine occupation like politics was through the use of fashion. The way they dressed distinguished them from their male colleagues and it established a sense of middle-class normalcy, giving women social acceptance among the electorate. It was a way "to enter a 'school of manhood' without becoming manly."[26] In this time, keeping up appearances was important – so important that the newspapers often had a society page that kept track of such things. Evelyn Benson described the kinds of things found in the society pages:

> You have to remember that in this era, *The Columbian* had a full page, sometimes two pages, of social events and dinners, and you would read things like "The Native Daughters' tea was held last Saturday at Irving House, and Mrs. Maude Corrigan poured for the first hour dressed in a stylish blue coat and matching hat." This is what the social page was all about. And very little items like "Mr. and Mrs. ----- and their son ----- had just returned from a jaunt to visit Mr. -----'s parents in Las Vegas," that sort of thing. Now, the page would be laughed off out of the paper, but this was very important in those days. And that would be a comment that a reporter might make.[27]

The society pages were a response to a public demand to know what other people

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[25] Buddle, 89.
[26] Ibid., 73.
[27] Benson, interview.

were doing and how they were doing it. It was a way to learn how to fit in. Sharon Carstairs and Tim Higgins argued that "[i]t was invasive and immaterial, but all women holding office for the first time seem to be subject to this desire for copy. In the case of Fairclough, even her shoe size and the sheerness of her stockings were topics to be discussed."[28] As prominent women, they were seen as potential role models for other women, if not in profession, then in fashion. This kind of chatty reporting also helped to reaffirm political women's femininity.

By making connections between politics and feminine characteristics, like fashion consciousness, the media was also ensuring that the women would not appear manly. When reporting the inaugural 1958 meeting of Prince George council led by Carrie Jane Gray, a *Citizen* photographic caption described the scene: "Full co-operation of council members was called for by Mayor Carrie Jane Gray following inaugural ceremony of 1958 council yesterday at noon in City Hall council chambers. Smartly dressed, Mayor Gray is seen here taking oath of office while City Clerk Arran Thomson officiates."[29] The accompanying article went into greater detail, flawlessly transitioning from fashion to business as though they were correlative: "The new mayor dressed in a cocoa-colored knit dress and wearing a turquoise hat and costume jewellery spoke in a low voice throughout the meeting and promised nothing but 'plenty of work' for her new council."[30] Gray's right-down-to-business attitude, as her speech clearly indicated, was made softer and more feminine, and therefore less threatening, by the description of her outfit. But, for the time being, she

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[28] Carstairs and Higgins, 169.

[29] Photo caption, *The Prince George Citizen*, 7 January 1958.

[30] "Mayor Gray Urges New Status for Civic Government," *The Prince George Citizen*, 7 January 1958.

was also being called "His Worship." In this way, Gray herself became a role model for other prominent women in the city – she demonstrated, rather unwittingly, how to pull off a "Victor Victoria" illusion successfully.

Beth Wood made an impression on the electorate and the media with her elegant hats – she was rarely seen without one. An emigrant from eastern Canada observing the informality of dress common to "the wilds of B.C." wrote to the *Columbian* and congratulated Wood on her "crowning touch[es]."[31] But the observer was left with one unanswered question: "Did the mayor's recent awareness of the importance of being hatted come with her new office as chief magistrate?"[32] Past issues of the *Columbian* reveal that the media appeared to delight in featuring Wood's attractiveness and enviable fashion sense.[33] Indeed, these features suggest that Wood was a source of pride for New Westminster; she combined ingenuity and capability with appealing looks. A *Vancouver Sun* article paid tribute to her fashion sense and included a large photo of her creating a hat. The caption read: "Houewife, alderman, fluent city council debator and fashion creator who makes her own hats and dresses, is Mrs. Elizabeth Wood, mayoralty candidate in New Westminster. Her attractively coiffured tresses are reflected in the mirror as she puts finishing touches to a new creation."[34] The article flits back and forth between fashion and politics rapidly, again giving the impression that they were correlative. Going directly from a discussion on teamwork and assisting others, the paper seamlessly changes track; "[t]he reason she continues to wear her hair in coils at the base of her neck which she has for the past

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[31] "Hurrah for Mayor, Cheers Hat Lover," *The British Columbian*, 21 November 1959.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See Figure 8.
[34] "Sense of Humor, Too." Photo credited to Don LeBlanc. See Figure 9.

Figure 8: Beth Wood's collection of hats became a familiar sight in the *British Columbian*. Source: New Westminster Archives, *Columbian* file.

Figure 9: Beth Wood shows off her millinery skills in a mayoralty candidate's biography in 1954. Source: "Sense of Humor Too," *The Vancouver Sun*, 7 December 1954.

10 years, refusing to bow to dictates of fashion is: 'I've a long neck, and it suits me to wear it this way as I was taught to hold my head up high.' Her hair reaches four inches below her fingertips."[35] Later, when she became mayor of New Westminster, the topic of Wood's fashion sense was acknowledged again. The *Province* reported that,

> Mayor Wood has all the feminine attributes. She is attractive, soft spoken, well dressed. In fact, it was nip and tuck with her whether she would go in for fashion designing or municipal affairs. The latter won out, but up until three years ago when work crowded it out, Mayor Wood made all her own clothes

[35] Ibid.

[...] and feels there is a tremendous opportunity for designing in B.C.[36]

In reference to women, simultaneous discussion of fashion and politics appears symbiotic while men evidently had no need to discuss fashion since the suit and tie has rarely changed over the decades. But for women, maintaining a stylish appearance meant they were also keeping up with and interested in social mores. Putting forth a clean, respectable presentation showed that women took care of themselves and cared about acceptability. Fashion was an integral part of balancing feminine respectability with a masculine métier as more women ventured into "less orthodox professions."[37]

The media's representation of women in municipal political office is slightly different from that of women in broader spectrum politics. There are a few different reasons for this, the most important being they were much closer to the communities they represented. At the municipal level, people could observe representatives much more closely and make voting decisions based on these women's lives outside politics. A second reason is the emphasis on femininity. In discussing broader spectrum politics, Leonard Williams found that "when it comes to crafting personal images, the prevailing approach is decidedly masculine. The emphasis in women's election campaigns was on stereotypically masculine traits over stereotypically feminine ones."[38] In contrast, women in municipal politics were expected to emphasize femininity, reaffirming the "Victor Victoria" phenomenon. In a similar vein, Buddle found that businesswomen "displayed a public image of respectable

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[36] "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist in Civic Life," *The Province*, 17 January 1959.

[37] Buddle, 83.

[38] Leonard Williams, "Gender, Political Advertising, and the 'Air Wars,'" in *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future,* eds. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 47.

femininity [and that] the media also did its part to represent self-employed women as overtly feminine."[39] Perhaps because they identified women in municipal politics as not masculine, a kind of casual familiarity (a third reason) developed. Women were on many occasions referred to in the press by their first names and even anonymously by just their sex, especially within the headlines:

"Woman accepts recount defeat"[40]

"Carrie Jane Flays Hospital Service"[41]

"Aldermen Smell Trouble When Lady Rises to Speak"[42]

"Come On Beth, Lewis – Why Not Make Up?"[43]

"Beth Against 'Shotgun Marriage'"[44]

"Beth Dreams of Straight, Clean, Creek"[45]

One headline in particular has very suggestive connotations:

"Beth Goes Geisha for Aldermen."[46]

This third reason, however, can also be seen in broader spectrum politics and can still be seen in Hilary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign. But of the three women, Carrie Jane Gray saw the baser side of the media in the form of name-calling. At the end of her mayoralty, the headlines declared her a "Stormy Petrel" and one article

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[39] Buddle, 73.

[40] "Woman Accepts Recount Defeat," *The Province*, 17 December 1970, in reference to Doreen Lawson.

[41] "Carrie Jane Flays Hospital Service," *The Prince George Citizen*, 29 April 1966.

[42] "Aldermen Smell Trouble When Lady Rises to Speak," *The Prince George Citizen*, 31 January 1957, in reference to Carrie Jane Gray.

[43] "Come On Beth, Lewis – Why Not Make Up?" *The British Columbian*, 17 February 1960, in reference to Beth Wood and Lewis Sangster.

[44] "Beth Against 'Shotgun Marriage,'" *The British Columbian*, 9 February 1960, in reference to a merger between New Westminster and D.L. 172.

[45] "Beth Dreams of Straight, Clean, Creek," *The British Columbian*, 5 January 1960.

[46] "Beth Goes Geisha for Aldermen," *The Columbian*, 8 May 1963. See also: Sydney Sharpe, *The Gilded Ghetto: Women and Political Power in Canada* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1994), 17-19.

even went so far as to call her the "Carrie Nation" of Prince George politics.[47]

Perhaps the most influential medium the press used to help form the identities of women in municipal politics was photographs. Publicity shots (and more rarely) political cartoons were often staged interpretations of what the women in politics were like, and could often be used to advance particular opinions. Political cartoons were rarer because most local papers did not have a resident cartoonist, most situations arising in council were not jocular enough to catch the attention of prominent cartoonists, and it may have been risky for a paper to be seen making fun of a woman in the same way as a man. The cartoons of the situation between Wood and J. Lewis Sangster support this claim because Wood is not explicitly identified, even though she was the one who had Sangster ejected from the council chamber.[48] Sangster became the explicit subject of the cartoons and Wood's role in the conflict became implicit.[49]

Publicity shots were set up to show subjects in a good light and to present multiple dimensions to politicians' personas. Wood had many such photos taken like

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[47] "Stormy Petrel Gone," *Victoria Times Colonist*, 1 January 1960; "Ald. Gray Defends Stand in Radio Talk," *The Prince George Citizen*, 13 November 1956; Carrie A. Nation was a temperance leader from Kansas who turned to violent methods of enforcing the prohibition laws, such as smashing saloons with a hatchet, in the early 20th century. She also ran a circuit of lecture tours across the US, Canada, and Britain. Using Nation as a simile for Gray is quite an exaggeration as Gray never resorted to physically violent methods of getting her point across. "Online Exhibit: Carry A. Nation: The Famous and Original Barroom Smasher," *Kansas State Historical Society*, <http://www.kshs.org/exhibits/ carry/carry1.htm> accessed 28 June 2007.

[48] This situation will be explained in further detail later in this chapter. The press called James Lewis Sangster a "man of many moods" – he was "the angry but dignified city father, the staid historian, the desk-thumping zealot, the glib salesman." Moreover, if he really tried hard, he could be all "sweetness and light." Sangster's long career with the city began at the age of 21 as a clerk in the city treasurer's department, helping to plan the city's docks in anticipation for the shipping boom that the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 would bring. As he became more experienced in the workings of municipal government, he also worked as an insurance salesman to augment his income. He was first elected as an alderman in 1931, continuing a desultory relationship with the city until his resignation in 1960, finishing a career that spanned more than forty-five years. "Sangster – Man of Many Moods," The British Columbian, 22 March 1960; Council Brief, New Westminster City Archives, accessed 7 June 2007.

[49] See Figures 10 and 11.

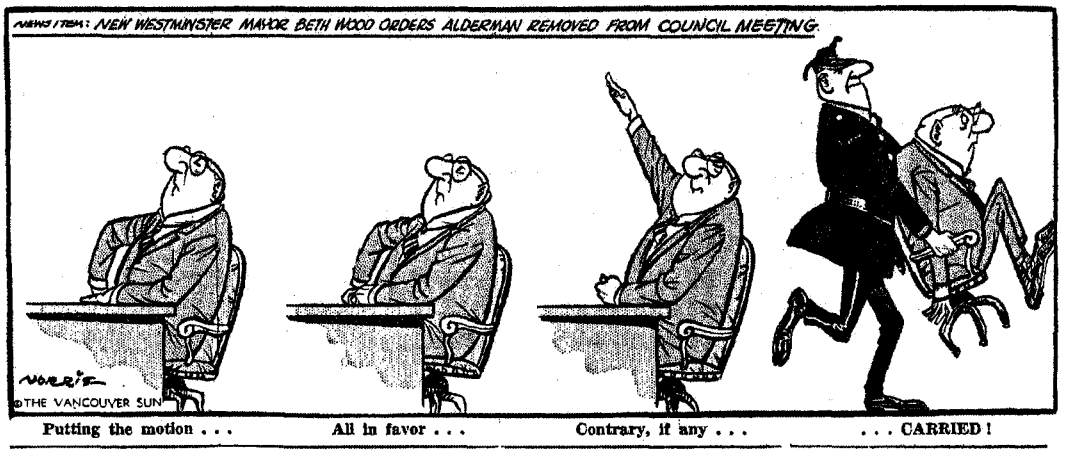

Figure 10: Len Norris cartoon featured in the *Vancouver Sun* making light of Beth Wood's decision to have J. L. Sangster removed from the council chamber. Source: *Vancouver Sun*, 25 November 1959.

Figure 11: Another cartoon by a local artist that appeared in the *British Columbian* featuring the situation between Beth Wood and J. L. Sangster. Source: *The British Columbian*, 15 February 1960.

the one above of her creating a hat. In one photo, Wood is pushing a wheelbarrow through her garden wearing immaculate white slacks and a flannel shirt, sleeves rolled to the elbows, with her hair perfectly arranged. The caption reads, "'[n]ot a posed shot,' said Columbian photographer Donbrell's note with this picture of Mayor Beth Wood. The mayor was getting a head start on Jaycee-sponsored clean up week starting officially Monday. Working around the yard is a welcome change to the cares of City Hall, she said."[50] The media may not have called it a posed shot, but she was probably aware that the photographer would be around for a photo opportunity.

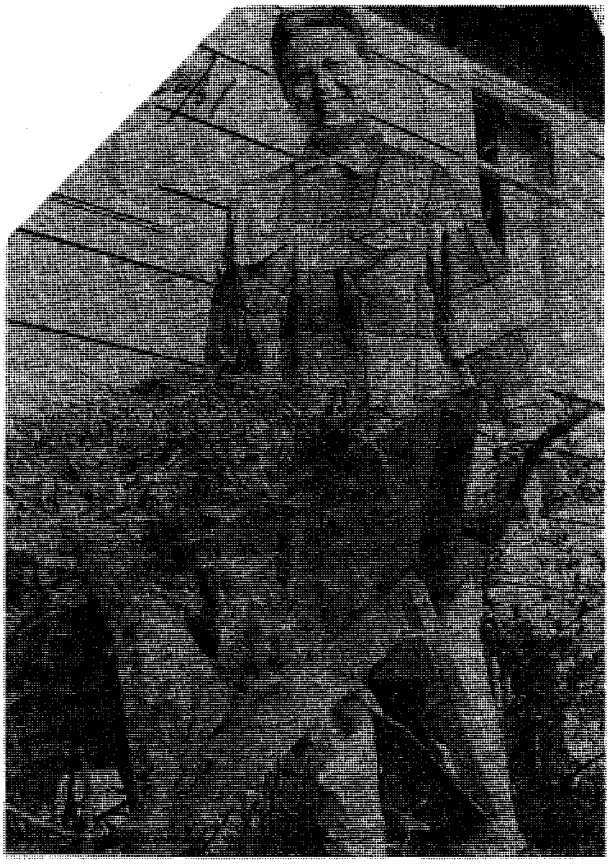

Figure 12: Beth Wood working in her yard for the Jaycee Cleanup. Source: "Not A Posed Shot," *The British Columbian*, 22 April 1961.

[50] "Not A Posed Shot," *The British Columbian*, 22 April 1961. See Figure 12.

Living in a community where most people would recognize them, these women never left the house without every hair in place and every wrinkle ironed out.[51] Wood was renowned for her ability around the house; several articles over the years drew attention to her as "Mrs. Fix-it, because of her ability to do masonry work, upholstery, carpentry, and other types of work [considered] man's work."[52] Displaying Wood's multi-faceted interests, another photo pictures Wood after a visit to Japan to celebrate the new sister-city link between New Westminster and Moriguchi. She wore a kimono while carrying a paper parasol and exhibiting several gifts from Moriguchi.[53]

Figure 13: Beth Wood displaying the gifts given to New Westminster by the city of Moriguchi, Japan. Source: Photo by Don Timbrell, in "Beth Goes Geisha for Aldermen," *The Columbian*, 8 May 1963.

[51] Langevin and Gray, interview. For instance, Langevin said "The best piece of advice she gave me was never go out in public without wearing lipstick. And always vote."

[52] "Former Mayor Passes Away."

[53] See Figure 13.

These images celebrate Wood's concern for matters of both local and international importance, while at the same time asserting her femininity.

An early media photo of Lawson pictures her at a playground with her five-year old daughter, Lisa.[54] At the time of the photo, Lawson was on the Parks and Recreation Commission and not yet running for council, but the formation of her public identity is clear. Pictured in a park, which was part of her public life, the addition of her daughter to the composition reminded the public of her private role as a mother. The adjoining article's title "Feminine View Out" combined with the photo reinforces the portrayal that she was a person offering her point of view, rather than a

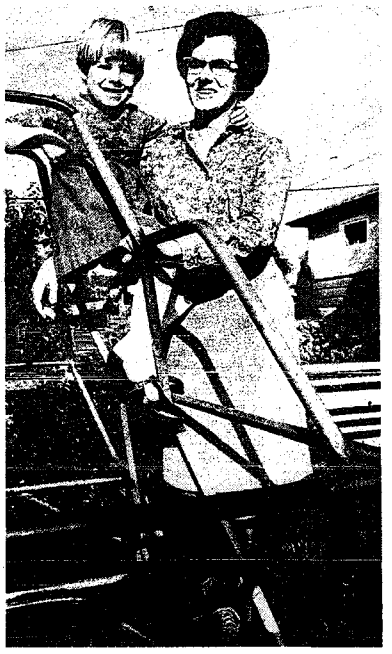

Figure 14: Doreen Lawson with her daughter Lisa at a Burnaby playground. Source: "Feminine View Out," *The Burnaby Examiner*, 26 October 1967.

[54] See Figure 14.

feminist one. In a later photo of Lawson, what was meant to be a staged photograph became a candid one. Lawson's work to save Burnaby Lake was featured in the *Burnaby Now*, and one of the ducks she was posing next to bit her finger.[55] The photographer captured her grimace and it was too good not to be printed. As with calling the women by their first names, this picture shows familiarity with the subject, bringing a different kind of attention to her hard work. In a way, it was probably more effective than a serious photo might have been, by pointing out the irony of the ducks biting the hand that had sheltered them. This kind of picture is much more memorable, if less flattering.

Figure 15: Doreen Lawson gets an ungrateful nip from a duck at Burnaby Lake. Source: *Vancouver Sun*, 19 September 1972.

[55] See Image 8.

Publicity shots of Gray ran along similar lines. When Princess Margaret came to Prince George in July of 1958, Mayor Gray was there to greet her wearing her robe of office.[56] Gray's two youngest daughters, nine-year-old Nadine and five-year-old Arlene, were also there to present the princess with a bouquet of white carnations and were "the envy of many hundreds of Prince George children who turned out to cheer the princess."[57] The image of Gray in her robe shows her in her public official capacity, but the inclusion of her children in the ceremony reinforced her private role as a mother. Later asked why she chose her own daughters to present the flowers to Princess Margaret, she simply replied that it was customary for the child of the mayor

Figure 16: Mayor Carrie Jane Gray and her two daughters, Nadine and Arlene, greet Princess Margaret at the Prince George airport. Source: with permission by The Exploration Place Archives, Prince George.

[56] See Figure 16.

[57] "Sun and Crowds Out for Princess: Complaints of Rushed Procession," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 July 1958. From the photo caption.

Figure 17: Carrie Jane Gray gives a speech in costume at an unknown event. Source: Gray family files, date unknown.

or councilmember to present.[58] But as the first woman mayor of Prince George, her decision could have been interpreted as a mother putting the interests of her children first. The adage that "a picture says a thousand words" is true – especially when it is so easy to manipulate those pictures and make them reflect a particular viewpoint. Whether dressing in hip-waders and a Tilley hat while canoeing across Burnaby Lake or speaking at a themed event dressed in Western garb, the appropriate outfit was necessary to make the right impression on whoever witnessed the event or saw the pictures.[59] Most importantly, images of these women as wholesome and respectable were necessary to make them appear less threatening and capable of performing both

[58] Jesse Cunliffe, "Mayor Gray Enjoyed Meeting Margaret," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 July 1958.

[59] See Figure 17.

roles.[60] A modern case in point is the gutsy image Kim Campbell had taken of herself when she became Justice Minister. In it, she wore a strapless evening gown and stood behind the robes of office, making it appear as though she were nude.[61] The shocking implications of the photograph made headlines across the country, making the incident almost more memorable than her short stint as Prime Minister.[62]

The real issue at stake when creating images of women in political office was contradicting the belief that the public and private spheres were dissonant and when someone tried to take on roles in both, the gender-prescribed role suffered. David B. Hill wrote in 1981 that, "sex roles may dictate that women, many of whom are homemakers or mothers of young children, have less time or opportunity for legislative service, especially when it is the equivalent of a full-time occupation."[63] But the underlying fear here on which Hill does not speculate, is that mothers of young children may neglect their duties at home, should they run and be elected to political office. Contradicting these beliefs was risky because there was a common attitude that women who were feminist were anti-family, a critical reason why many women in politics rejected the term

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[60] Buddle, 95.

[61] "The Right Honourable A. Kim Campbell," *First Among Equals: The Prime Minister in Canadian Life and Politics*, Library and Archives Canada, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/primeministers/h4-3482-e.html. Permission to use photograph of Kim Campbell by Barbara Woodley, photographer, 28 July 2007. See Figure 18.

[62] "Mad About Kim," *Maclean's* 105, 46 (November 1992): 48. In discussing the photo, the article reads: "a bare-shouldered Kim Campbell holding her black legal robes in front of her on a coat hanger drew sharp criticism from some of the federal justice minister's political opponents. Comparing Campbell to Madonna, Saanich/Gulf Islands NDP MP Lynn Hunter said that the photo, which appeared in a recent book of portraits of Canadian women, was 'inappropriate.' Campbell, noting that she was not nude when she was photographed, said that her critics lacked a sense of humor." For more information, see also Allan Fotheringham, "The Blouse that Launched a Campaign," *Maclean's* 105, 46 (November 1992): 80; and Robert Fife, *Kim Campbell: The Making of a Politician* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993).

[63] David B. Hill, "Political Culture and Female Political Representation," *The Journal of Politics* 43, 1 (1981): 159.

Figure 18: Kim Campbell poses for a photo that caused a sensation. Source: Library and Archives Canada, with permission by photographer.

"feminist." Running for public office presents a "double-bind not faced by men" because "women are generally held responsible for meeting daily family needs[; therefore,] the very fact of running for office signifies a woman's willingness to break out of traditionally defined gender roles."[64] By many standards, breaking out of traditional roles allows the label "feminist" to be applied to them. However, many women in politics did not feel that they needed a politically charged label to define their identities. The use of images such as the ones above was a declaration that women could take on both roles and reassure the public that their families were not suffering for it. W.A.C Bennett had made a comment about businesswomen and emphasizing familial commitments, and the same applies to women in politics:

[64] Williams, 46.

"women could be businesswomen and they could even be successful, but they had to appear lady-like, gracious and feminine, as the photographs depicted."[65] And they did.

On the topic of familial commitments, women more often than not faced inquiries into their private lives during election campaigns. In his research on women in political campaign advertisements, Williams found that men used references to their families as a demonstration of "social stability and personal character" whereas "political consultants have acted as if 'drawing family members into women's ads has been taboo.'"[66] Williams poses the question, "[s]ince a woman's family plays a key role in encouraging her candidacy, does she then feature them or acknowledge their contribution in her political advertising?"[67] His answer based on "conventional wisdom is that she should not do so, because that would only highlight her difference and provoke the very questions she should avoid."[68] But, as we have seen with women at the municipal level, highlighting their family proved useful in several situations, made them seem less threatening, and actually reinforced their social stability and personal character. The questions that Williams suggests women should avoid are how they plan to take care of their children and whether their husbands approve of their choices.[69] The answer to the former is to hire a housekeeper. Wood told reporters that "[w]hen the mayoralty came along, so did a housekeeper to look after the home front."[70] Gray also had a housekeeper when her husband was out of

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[65] Buddle, 86.
[66] Williams, 46.
[67] Ibid., 46.
[68] Ibid., 46.
[69] Ibid., 46.
[70] "Royal City Mayoress No Feminist."

town, which was often due to his career. Her daughters never found the life to be disruptive; "Mum raised her kids. [...] Most of her meetings were at night, so [...] anytime she had to go out of town, she got someone to come in, because dad was away. [...] But our lives were not disrupted."[71] The answer to the latter question appears to be positive; supportive husbands were necessary to the morale and success of women's political campaigns.

Despite any backlash to their own gender role identities, husbands were always there behind the scenes supporting their wives' decisions. In one study, the "respondents were quite emphatic about their need for supportive husbands: 'all the married legislators agree that a cooperative husband is the first requirement for successfully juggling family and career.'"[72] Although, it took time to warm up to the idea for some husbands. By the time she decided to run for council, Gray had four school-age children. As chair of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for her children's school when it had burned down in 1951, she found the mayor's indifferent response unsatisfactory, so she wrote a letter to the editor criticizing the mayor's use of tax-dollars.[73] In response, another reader suggested that Gray "qualify for alderman."[74] With just days left to put her name in the hat, she did –without her husband's consent since he was out of town.[75] When asked by reporters what her husband thought of her candidature, she replied, "'He refuses to have anything to do

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[71] Langevin and Gray, interview.

[72] Susan Gluck Mezey, "Does Sex Make a Difference? A Case Study of Women in Politics," *The Western Political Quarterly* 31, 4 (1978): 495.

[73] Carrie Jane Gray, letter to the editor, 29 November 1951.

[74] Cyril Dupre, letter to the editor, 3 December 1951.

[75] Nikki Moir, "Carrie Jane Gray: A Legend in Her Own Time," *The Province* 16 October 1971.

with it and denies all knowledge of my intentions.'"[76] When she won the seat, she "jokingly" told reporters "'I must hurry and tell my husband, he's sitting at home hoping I didn't get elected.'"[77] After being on council only a short while, Gray discovered she was pregnant with her fifth child. Only once did this situation unnerve her: she had to pose for an official council photograph ten days before the child was due. Having warmed to the idea of his wife as a councillor, Mr. Gray encouraged her to go. The 1952-53 Council portrait shows "Carrie Jane, with a bright posy at the neckline of her dress [as] probably the only pregnant councillor anywhere to pose for an official portrait."[78] Gray returned to council the following month as per usual. As the first woman nominated for a "Woman of the Week" feature, the *Prince George Citizen* reported that "[h]er family thought it was 'all highly amusing' when Mrs. Gray broke precedent here in 1951 by announcing she would seek office[. But] they are quite used to their 'Mrs. Alderman' now and give her a big helping hand in her many projects."[79] Gray's husband did not play a significant role in her career other than going to functions; however, he "supported her as far as what she wanted to do" until his death in 1964.[80]

Occasionally, a spouse's career created conflict of interest for women involved in municipal politics. Wood's husband Jack was an engineer on the civic payroll and his position may have coloured her 1948 aldermanic campaign, when she declared that the "pension scheme for civic employees was pitifully low. The most

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[76] "Two Women Contest Aldermanic Vacancy," *Prince George Citizen*, 6 December 1951.
[77] "Prince George Gets First Woman Alderman," *Prince George Citizen*, 17 December 1951.
[78] Moir.
[79] "The *Citizen* Nominates Carrie Jane Gray: Woman of the Week," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 June 1953.
[80] Langevin and Gray, interview.

the oldest employee of the city could get is $64 a month."[81] After winning the election, the first to point a finger was defeated mayoral candidate Edward Mills. He sent a letter to the council, questioning the "[q]ualification of a woman alderman, wife of a civic employee, to sit on the 1949 council."[82] Mills cited parts of the Municipal Act, which states that any direct or indirect affiliation with the municipality would result in the disqualification of a candidate and, if elected, the candidate would face a $50 fine *per diem* that he/she sits on council.[83] The council or any individual was well within their rights to challenge the candidate, and Wood responded that it would then "'be up to the court to decide the interpretation of the Act.'"[84] After having her lawyers investigate the matter, Wood stated: "I was advised that my position is quite sound and that the government never intended an interpretation of the Municipal Act to disqualify the wife of an employee. If this were so it could apply to members of the immediate family of such employees,"[85] and any candidate running for re-election would also be in conflict of interest. When the new council took their seats at the table, they decided not to take action in response to Mills' complaint.[86]

Over the course of Wood's career, her husband's status as a civic employee remained a point of friction especially with one member of council, James Lewis Sangster. The council had locked horns over the post of a city electrical engineer for many years. However, by the end of 1959, council decided that they would

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[81] "Large Crowd Hears 27 Civic Candidates: Mayor Mott and Alderman Cook Draw Applause from 1000 Voters," *The British Columbian*, 14 December 1948.

[82] "Mrs. Wood Defends Seat As Alderman: Left Up to New Council," *The British Columbian*, 21 December 1948.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] "Council Sustains Ald. Mrs. Wood," *The British Columbian*, 3 January 1949.

amalgamate two posts to create the city electrician's job – those of Len Hume, who was overdue for retirement and was the inside boss and Jack Wood who was the outside boss.[87] The logical next step would have been to promote Jack Wood to the new position. However, Sangster and the Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia agreed that the new electrician should be "a graduated, diploma-carrying electrical engineer. [...] 'If we can get a qualified engineer for the same price as an ordinary electrician, we should take him.'"[88]

Tensions on council strained to breaking point by February of 1960. Sangster accused Alderman Jack Allison, Chairman of the Utilities Committee, of dithering too much over the issue and not taking action.[89] After repeatedly warning Sangster to desist addressing the council on the topic, Wood was compelled to have the police remove Sangster from council chambers. The press made light of the situation, of how historians of the future would look back on the situation and laugh, but also pointed out the difficulty the clash had placed on the other council members:

> Their battling may seem laughable when seen through a century of retrospect. But to their contemporaries it is distressing as well as ludicrous. Other Aldermen stared blankly at their desk blotters or up at the ceiling while the angry debate grew angrier Monday night. Their protests melted in the heat of the bitter antagonism between Mayor Wood and Ald. Sangster. Their expressions were pained and they groaned when the mayor called in the police. And Lewis Sangster was carried out for the second time in less than three months. 'You can't do it,' he told police this time. But they did."[90]

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[87] "Electrician to Be Engineer, City Council Rules," *The British Columbian*, 22 December 1959; "Sangster's Back, With Two Issues," *The British Columbian*, 8 February 1960.

[88] "Electrician to Be Engineer."

[89] City of New Westminster, *Council Minutes 1960-1961*, 15 February 1960, pp. 32-33.

[90] "'You Can't Do It' ... But They Did Do It!" *The British Columbian*, 15 February 1960; "'You'll Have to Carry Me' ... And They Did Just That," *The British* Columbian, 24 November 1959. Sangster was evicted from council the first time over his refusal to desist debating a topic that council had already voted on. It was a proposal to "set up an inter-municipal bargaining committee composed of key officials of Lower Mainland municipalities to handle civic labor union negotiations." It was a proposal that Wood endorsed, but Sangster did not. Benson, interview; Sangster, being crippled with

Sangster later told reporters that "'She doesn't know any more about council procedure than I do about knitting socks."[91] Soon afterwards, Sangster resigned from council as a protest against what he called "'Mayor Wood's attempt to promote her husband.'" He charged that "'[s]he has used personal interests in an attempt to influence the utility committee.'" Mayor Wood denied all allegations against her.[92] Aldermen Doug Stout and R. W. Ballantyne backed up Sangster's claim that Wood "held out for promotion within the light department at a committee session" and Stout added, "'I leave to the mayor's conscience the ethical aspects of her appearance at a meeting where this appointment was under review.'"[93]

Whether or not Wood really was trying to secure the position for her husband is unknown – there is no hard evidence one way or the other. It seems unlikely since council had already decided to hire someone outside the department for the position; there was very little Wood could have done for her husband by that point in time. What this narrative does prove, however, is how women's spouses could influence their public identity. From the outset, Wood had been under fire for her husband's career, and it shaped the way the public understood her because of the way the media presented and sensationalized an issue where they had no evidence either. They presented what they knew in a theatrical manner and allowed the public to jump to their own conclusions.

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arthritis and unable to walk without the use of crutches, refused to use them, forcing the police to "scoop" him up and carry him out.

[91] "'You Can't Do It.'"

[92] "June Vote To Replace Sangster," *The British Columbian*, 25 May 1960.

[93] "Beth Accused of Seeking Husband's Promotion: Left to Mayor's Conscience: Stout Charges 'Interference,'" *The British Columbian*, 25 May 1960.

Most of the time, however, identity-affiliation with spouses was not this explosive. Nevertheless, the media tended to associate women with husbands who held prominent positions more so than women whose husbands held ordinary careers. Instead of being labelled "housewife," "teacher," or whatever their choice of career was, their identity became inclusive of their husbands and they were known as "wife of -----." Doreen Lawson makes an excellent example of the double standard that emerges in the media. During the municipal election of 1970, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the Burnaby Voter's Association had decided to "back Mrs. Lawson, the wife of Ed Lawson, Canadian director of the Teamsters' Union," instead of bringing attention to her own accomplishments as a former vice president of the BC Trade Union Congress (now BC Federation of Labour), among others.[94] Two months later, the *Province* informed the public of Lawson's defeat: "A returning officer recount in the Burnaby aldermanic race has given incumbent Hugh Ladner a 22-vote victory over Doreen Lawson, wife of Senator Ed Lawson."[95] The following year, Lawson won in her third attempt at an aldermanic seat and the *Columbian's* review of the election stated, "[a]lso elected to council for two-year terms were Doreen Lawson, wife of Senator Ed Lawson, with 6,366 votes, and Tom Constable with 5,811."[96] The double standard comes in when men running for political office were not identity-affiliated with their wives. Similarly, when the *Columbian* ran a Canadian Press (Ottawa) feature on Senator Ed Lawson, they examined how young he was to be a senator, and they reported that his hobbies were "'golf and girls' [...] The girls, he

[94] "Civic Slate Selected," *The Vancouver Sun*, 2 October 1970.
[95] "Woman Accepts Recount Defeat," *The Province*, 17 December 1970.
[96] Jim Russell, "Prittie's Back, Felt Confident," *The Columbian*, 13 December 1971.

maintains, are his three daughters."[97] But the media did not identify his wife at all, let alone introduce him as the husband of Burnaby Alderman, Doreen Lawson.

The media had a complicating and enduring impact on the identities of women in municipal politics by concentrating more on their looks and home lives than on the more important intellectual issues and opinions, producing an image construction template that still exists in the present. In constructing their public images, women experienced a "Victor Victoria" phenomenon that took a respectable, middle-class woman, placed her in a masculine-oriented occupation, and emphasized other obvious feminine traits in order to preserve respectability. Even though masculine traits, such as competitiveness, speech making, and idea promulgating, were the ideals to strive for, feminine traits such as demureness, attractiveness, and family orientation were the ideals that were used to create the public identities of women in municipal office. The negative side of emphasizing femininity was confusing fashion sense for political sense. On the positive side, because of their differences, women appeared less threatening and acceptable to the public and to their colleagues. Image consciousness was especially important to women in municipal politics because they lived, played, and worked within the community and among the people they represented. Their personal lives were less anonymous than those who were involved in broader spectrum politics and represented their communities from a distance. Perhaps because of this proximity, women in municipal politics often became identity-affiliated with their husbands whose own careers were well established in their respective communities. All-in-all, these are media-induced identity creation situations with

[97] "Ed's Young To Be A Senator But Don't Let Looks Fool You," *The Columbian*, 11 January 1972.

which women in politics are still struggling. However, the problem does not wholly lie with the media. Part of the problem also stems from being able to accept changes within gender roles, which society has been slow to do.

Conclusion:

"Justice for All, Favor for None"[1]: Legacies of Women in British Columbia Municipal Politics, 1950-1980

Carrie Jane Gray's campaign declaration, "Human business is my business. Justice for all, favor for none. I have the knowledge, experience and time," perhaps best sums up the careers of each of these women.[2] Gray, along with Beth Wood and Doreen Lawson, each presented their concerns and ideas for a better community with integrity and determination. They believed in doing what was right for the majority, what knowledge and experience they did not have was gathered along the way and, most significantly, they favoured no one and nothing but their visions. After running a tiresome gauntlet of avoiding questions about their feminist beliefs and smiling for cameras, Gray, Wood, and Lawson still managed to find the energy to affect change within their respective cities. These accomplishments established them as reliable incumbents and valued members of their communities. Voters knew they could count on these women to advocate collective interests in part because of their preference to refrain from associating with feminist ideas and goals. Each of these women contributed a diversity of experience to their respective municipal councils and gained the respect and admiration of their communities. A summary of the accomplishments these women achieved throughout their careers will help put their goals into a perspective illuminating them as feminists, despite their intentions to deflect such questions and reinforcing their wishes to be known as politicians first and foremost.

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[1] Candidates notice, *The Prince George Citizen*, 8 December 1966.
[2] Ibid.

Beth Wood began various projects during her years on council, some of which were successful and others that were not. While Wood may have lost some of these battles, her real accomplishment was the determination and dedication she exhibited during her tenure as alderman throughout the 1950s and then as mayor from 1959 until 1964. One of Wood's legacies was her compassion for the poor: her favourite ongoing project was collecting and distributing food throughout the Fraser Valley to the needy.[3] An observer commented, "[s]he has done more for the poor in this town than anyone I know."[4] But perhaps her most noteworthy early project is the comfort station.[5] The New Westminster Council of Women (an organization that Wood supported) endorsed the idea first proposed in 1946.[6] The city council put aside $21,000 to build the comfort station at either the intersections of Sixth and Columbia Streets or Lorne and Clarkson Streets, but shelved the plan until Wood took it up again in 1949.[7] Several times Wood brought up the issue in council and each time more pressing concerns took precedence. She claimed, "the project was being deliberately delayed in order to 'permit lobbying of council members.'"[8] Another year passed and the council finally put it to the vote. However, the vote was delayed yet another week. Mayor J. Lewis Sangster was recovering in hospital from a knee injury and he wished to take part in the vote "as it required a lot of consideration and

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[3] "Obituaries," *The British Columbian*, 25 September 1994.

[4] Al "Capone" Iverson, "Show Me A Better Town!" letter to the editor, newspaper unknown, 14 November 1959, Beth Wood news clippings file, New Westminster Archives.

[5] A comfort station is a euphemism for a public washroom.

[6] "Women's Council Urges Action: Comfort Station Scheme Revived," *The British Columbian*, 15 March 1949; "About That Comfort Station: It May Be Given the Upper Deck," *The British Columbian*, 3 October 1949.

[7] "About That Comfort Station: It May Be Given the Upper Deck," *The British Columbian*, 3 October 1949.

[8] "Comfort Station Battled: Delayed A Week in Close Vote," *The British Columbian*, 13 December 1949.

'he would like to go into the matter further.'" Wood responded by "demanding" if he was "'referring to a report in *The British Columbian* about an offer for the property?'"[9] The acting mayor hinted there may be some truth to that report, but did not confirm. The hospital allowed Sangster to leave his bed long enough for the express purpose of attending the council meeting that would ultimately decide the fate of the comfort station.[10] The mayor and three aldermen voted to rescind the project, disposing of the comfort station plan and redistributing the money allotted to it. Wood and two remaining aldermen, all Health Committee members, voted against the motion.[11] Wood charged that someone wishing to purchase the site and build offices had influenced members of council, but the aldermen denied being approached.[12]

As mayor, Wood achieved many personal and public goals, bringing notability to herself and to New Westminster. One of her most celebrated accomplishments was to establish a sister-city relationship with Moriguchi, Japan, the first of its kind in Canada. City clerk A.G. Brine advised Mayor Masataka Kizaki of the City of Moriguchi that the resolution had passed unanimously on November 5, 1962, "in the hope that [...] friendly relations, the exchange of mutual culture and a better international understanding may be fostered between Canada and Japan and throughout the World."[13] The following year, the city of Moriguchi invited Wood to visit where "'masses of our countries' two flags [were] everywhere'" and 310,000

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[9] Ibid.

[10] "Ailing Mayor Will Attend 'Hot' Session," *The British Columbian*, 19 December 1949.

[11] "Comfort Station Plan Killed: Charges Fly in Bitter Debate: Four Aldermen Switch Backing: Sangster's Toilet Survey Shows 120 on Columbia," *The British Columbian*, 20 December 1949.

[12] Ibid.

[13] A.G. Brine, City Clerk, letter to Mayor Masataka Kizaki of Moriguchi Japan, 5 November 1962.

Figure 19: Mayor Beth Wood with Mayor Masataka Kizaki from Moriguchi, Japan and Squamish Chief Simon Baker in a ceremonial presentation. Chief Baker made Mayor Moriguchi an honourary Chief and was given the "blood name" of Jay-Khum-Smukum (Rising Sun). Source: *Columbian*, 3 September 1963.

people greeted her.[14] Evelyn Benson said that the sister-city relationship helped mend post-war antipathy between the two peoples, initiating a trend of such alliances across Canada.[15] The symbolic relationship between the two countries strengthened when Typhoon Frieda hit the northwest coast of North America with destructive force on October 12, 1962.[16] The large stand of trees behind the New Westminster City Hall

[14] "Beth Goes Geisha For Aldermen," *The British Columbian*, 8 May 1963. See Image 12.

[15] Evelyn [Sangster] Benson, interview with the author, 11 June 2007.

[16] This Typhoon had the unusual distinction of, instead of petering out, gaining momentum and was reclassified as a hurricane as it turned east. Wind gusts were up to 125 kph. Among some of the reported damage in Vancouver was broken windows, one fatality, and 3,000 fallen trees in Stanley Park. "The History of Metropolitan Vancouver," http://www.vancouverhistory.ca/chronology1962.htm, accessed 7 February 2008.

were "decimated" and "Moriguchi stepped in and they sent their gardeners over and they [designed and] created the Japanese garden [...] as a gesture to the city and now it's a show-place for the city."[17] Mayor Kizaki made an official visit to New Westminster for the opening ceremonies, September 1, 1963.[18] He stated that "[t]he Japanese people feel this connection between the ordinary people of both countries will ensure that there will never again be war between our countries."[19]

Throughout Wood's mayoralty, she had made a name for herself as a politician with tenacity and a woman with polish. She had no qualms about making her opinions known, some of which aroused controversy and illustrated her conservative leanings. For example, in a speech to the Vancouver Kiwanis Club, Wood proffered that "this country shouldn't be quite as free as it is. [...] It frets me to no end when I know that in the University of B.C. professors can stand up and talk communism, giving all phases of this thinking."[20] Her speech then shifted tack when she stated, "I feel we should stand up and say Canada is and shall remain a Christian country. Everyone should be a Christian."[21] A student at the University of British Columbia found Wood's didactic speech offensive, writing to the school's newspaper that it would insult the intelligence of an adolescent: "Whether we do or don't believe in God or Communism is a choice entirely up to the individual, and we don't need

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[17] Benson, interview.

[18] Sydney Orpwood, "Parks Impress Sister-City Mayor: Where Are the People? He Asks," *The British Columbian*, 3 September 1963.

[19] Orpwood.

[20] "'Don't Let Professors Teach Communism,'" newspaper unknown, 1 February 1963, Beth Wood news clippings file, New Westminster Archives.

[21] Ibid.

people telling us what to believe in."[22] That people agreed with her or not was of no consequence to Wood. What mattered most to her was promoting her ideals to the best of her abilities, even if it meant ruffling a few feathers.

Wood was deeply interested in the municipal affairs of not only New Westminster, but of the rest of Canada as well. The level of her involvement in municipal unions is unsurpassed: in 1960 alone, the Fraser Valley Municipal Association elected her vice-president; she served as the British Columbian representative on the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities; and she was on the executive of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.[23] Later in her career, the Department of Education named Wood to one of nine places on the founding Board of Governors of Simon Fraser University in October of 1963.[24] A month later, she was the first woman to receive the appointment of President of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities.[25] And in February of 1964, Wood was appointed a life member of the New Westminster Council of Women in recognition of her continual support.[26]

Inexplicably, on April 13 of 1964, Wood suddenly resigned from the mayor's seat. When news of the resignation reached the council chambers, there was "stunned silence."[27] The *Columbian's* reaction was "regretful," writing "she has been outspoken in the cause of independence, finances, expansion and welfare. She has

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[22] Norm McEwan, "Letters to the Editor: Power – The Key Word," *The Ubyssey*, 14 February 1963, The University of British Columbia Archives, http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubyssey/UBYSSEY_1963_02_14.pdf, accessed 8 February 2008.

[23] "New Post for Mayor Beth Wood," newspaper unknown, 9 January 1960, Beth Wood news clippings file, New Westminster Archives.

[24] City of New Westminster, *Council Minutes 1962-1963*, 15 October 1963, p. 154.

[25] Ibid., 25 November1963, p. 178.

[26] City of New Westminster, *Council Minutes 1964-1965*, 3 February 1964, p. 21.

[27] "Mayor's Resignation Leaves City Stunned: Council to Set Byelection Date," *The British Columbian*, 14 April 1964.

won repute abroad as a charming ambassador, an eloquent speaker and a doughty fighter for civic rights."[28] In light of this resignation, she forfeited her appointment as President of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities. Speculation and rumour ran rampant throughout the city as to her reasons for tendering her resignation, but she remained silent. Evelyn Benson remembered some of the rumours: "one had to do with an illicit affair with a public official and then another one was about a clandestine real estate deal," but none had any basis in truth.[29] Even the *Columbian* took a turn at speculating as to why she resigned: it was "health reasons," or concluding that perhaps the federal government offered her another appointment "to represent Canada at some level in Japan [...] in view of her friendly relations with the city of Moriguchi [...] and her apparent personal success in establishing social and business ties there."[30] But this ambassadorship was refuted by a spokesman for the federal department on external affairs: "'there is absolutely no chance whatever that Mrs. Wood will be appointed to an external affairs job in any area.'"[31] But as with any rumour, it was all unfounded, and the terms ending a seventeen-year career remains a mystery.

The woman who, with perhaps the least experience initially, accomplished the greatest diversity of tasks throughout her career and with the utmost integrity was Carrie Jane Gray. Her first term on council was a bit rough, but Gray jumped right in, learned all she could, and made several accomplishments in those two years. Although she had "never even so much as attended a Council meeting before she ran

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[28] "Beth Wood's Resignation: This is Too Sudden!" *The British Columbian*, 15 April 1964.
[29] Benson, interview.
[30] "Mayor's Resignation Leaves City Stunned."
[31] Ibid.

for alderman" she found that she "thoroughly enjoyed herself in learning the many complicated aspects of civic affairs."[32] Gray assured voters, "'I intend to learn this business properly and I am interested in every phase of it.'"[33] Mayor Garvin Dezell put Gray on the Fire and Water, the Zoning, Health, Parks and Cemetery, and the Town Planning Committees, sparking a career-long interest in these branches of civic governance.[34] The Parks Committee appointment was considered important because it had been implied that "a good portion of the $111,000 collected [the year before] in land sales would go towards park development,"[35] which was quite the introduction into council. Early on in her career, she became interested in upgrading the cemetery. According to Gray's daughter, Arlene Langevin, "the cemetery was in very rough shape and when she was put on the committee she said she 'wouldn't be caught dead in that graveyard the way it was.'"[36] And in 1953, the graveyard got the needed attention from council with an earmarked $2000 from land sales, pending provincial approval, to be "spent on general beautification, including the planting of trees and grass as well as painting and repair of the existing fence. In addition, the new section of the cemetery already in use will be completely fenced and some clearing will be done."[37]

Gray also began a "crackdown" on unsanitary eating establishments in Prince George. She took it upon herself to visit each of the restaurants with the city health inspector and see for herself what was going on. Gray reported to council that she

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[32] "The *Citizen* Nominates Carrie Jane Gray: Woman of the Week," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 June 1953.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Minutes of the Council of the City of Prince George, 7 January 1952, 408-409.

[35] "First Woman Alderman Here Awarded Big Parks Post: Mayor Announces Committee Appointments," *The Prince George Citizen*, 7 January 1952.

[36] Langevin and Gray, interview.

[37] "$2000 Earmarked For Cemetery Spruce-Up," *The Prince George Citizen*, 8 June 1953.

"'never saw anything in my life like what I saw this afternoon.' Alderman Gray described the conditions in one city eating house as 'absolutely dreadful' and said the health unit needs not only the moral, but active support of the council."[38] A month later, she reported to council that she had inspected every restaurant in town "with the exception of one exclusively male club and that she would make rounds twice more this year to see that standards are maintained."[39] She found conditions in these places as "'some good, some fair and some downright scruffy.'"[40] Moreover, she announced that the status of the washrooms in these establishments was "rough."[41] Public criticism of these establishments and bylaws introduced by Gray quickly brought up the standards among Prince George restaurants.[42]

In her first term, Gray proved she was willing and able to stand up for standards that she felt the citizens of Prince George deserved, and the council soon discovered how blunt and perseverant she could be. There were several projects or bylaws to which she strongly objected. One issue that became controversial was over the sale of land to the Prince George Golf and Country Club in 1954. Council attempted to pass a bylaw that would allow the country club to purchase sixty-five acres of land from the city for $20 an acre in return for almost 100 acres of other land the club possessed.[43] Gray argued that the British Columbia Municipal Act "forbids

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[38] "Crackdown Starting On Unsanitary Cafes: Alderman Describes One Place as 'Dreadful,'" *The Prince George Citizen*, 29 January 1953.

[39] "Alderman Gray To Continue Crusade For Cleaner Cafes," *The Prince George Citizen*, 26 February 1953.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Cafes Cleaned Up, Alderman Reports," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 February 1953; "Alderman Gray to Continue Crusade"; "Sanitation and Nuisance Law Becomes Effective in City," *Prince George Citizen*, 12 July 1954.

[43] "Ald. Gray Opposes Land Sale To Prince George Golf Club," *The Prince George Citizen*, 4 November 1954; "Four Bylaws Pass in Light Vote Friday," *The Prince George Citizen*, 20 June 1955.

council to vote on any issue in which they are financially interested." Alderman R.W. Hilton and Mayor Bryant, she stated, were ineligible because both were shareholders in the club.[44] The following meeting, Gray was determined to stop the sale that was so advantageous to the club. She arrived armed with more information, stating that "their passage of first reading of a golf club land sale bylaw a week previously had been invalid under the provisions of the British Columbia Municipal Act" because "only three aldermen voted for the first reading of the golf club measure."[45] She had also done some research into how much the land was actually worth; where the city council proposed to sell the land to the private company for $1300, the actual market value of the land was $65,000.[46] The issue was forced to go to the electorate to decide in a plebiscite and the electorate agreed with the rest of council; the land was sold for $20 an acre.[47] Conversely, there were some projects and bylaws that she strongly defended as well. During a council meeting, the discussion turned to whether or not permits for lighted signs on storefronts were too difficult to obtain. Gray "requested to be advised if this body was acting as the Council or a pack of nitwits," in support of the current regulations.[48] It was this kind of crack that the council and the public came to expect from Gray.

Gray's honesty and willingness to stick to her convictions no matter what, however, was not construed by the majority of the public as contrariness for contrary's sake; they recognized in Gray someone who was willing to tell them the

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[44] "Ald. Gray Opposes Land Sale."

[45] "Ald. Gray Says Council Act Invalid in Golf Club Deal: Land Worth $65,000 Would Sell For $1300," *The Prince George Citizen*, 12 November 1954.

[46] Ibid.

[47] "Four Bylaws Pass in Light Vote Friday," *The Prince George Citizen*, 20 June 1955.

[48] Minutes of the Council of the City of Prince George, 22 October 1956, 519.

truth as she saw it and to go to bat for the electorate. That is why she was consistently re-elected. But it did not mean that other council members had to like it. The *Prince George Citizen* described to readers the response elicited in council to Gray:

> When Alderman Carrie Jane Gray announces to city council, as she quite frequently does, that she has 'a matter that I would like to discuss,' her colleagues can usually be relied upon to exhibit all the little traits that are common to the human nervous system when trouble can be seen approaching. Reporters who are human too, grip their pencils tighter and strain to catch every word.[49]

She emphasized her honesty and experience particularly during election campaigns, and none more so than in the race for the seat of mayor in 1957. Gray preferred to address the public over the radio, for "nothing I say or do comes to you in an unbiased manner via the press."[50] In a press statement, Gray emphasized a promise of "'integrity in the administration and the welfare of the city and its citizens."[51] This was a promise she felt sure she could keep.

Besides publicizing her six years as alderman and four years on the executive of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Gray also reported to the city that "[f]or the past months I have been reading minutes of the councils since its incorporation in 1915. As well as being very informative, this has been the most interesting reading I have ever done."[52] By disclosing this information, she was telling the electorate that she knew more about the city council than any other contender. No campaign of Gray's, however, could have put it better than the *Citizen* reader who said, "I say let us put our X by the name of Carrie Jane Gray for mayor

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[49] "Aldermen Smell Trouble When Lady Rises to Speak," 31 January 1957.

[50] "Alderman Gray Enters Mayoralty Contest: Stands Against Manager Plan," *The Prince George Citizen*, 8 November 1957.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

and be assured of honest administration. Sometimes we don't agree with her but I think we all respect someone who has the courage to stand for what they believe is right."[53] The election ended with "the tall greying housewife" defeating Morrison by a margin of forty nine votes in the largest voter turnout ever recorded.[54]

Nothing could highlight Gray's honesty and integrity more during her term as mayor, than when she fought a difficult campaign to have the city provided with natural gas from a local company. Natural gas in Prince George was both needed and wanted by residents and businesses, but it was very expensive because of a feud between two distributors: Inland Natural Gas Co. and Prince George Gas Co.[55] Two years before, a referendum was held and the electorate voted that the Prince George Gas Co. should get the city contract; however, because of the feud, the laying of pipes and hooking up Prince George customers was slow to get underway.[56] Gray said that "Prince George needs to have secondary industries, but asked how the city could get them while having to pay a 'ridiculously high price' for a resource at its very doorstep."[57] Inland Gas was taking any step necessary to block Prince George Gas from accommodating the city. They pressured city hall into withdrawing support from Prince George Gas in exchange for a $1,250,000 system built that year and

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[53] "Reader Wants New Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 3 December 1957.

[54] "May Be Recount of Votes: Gray Named Mayor: Handling of Polls Is Questioned by Morrison Count," *The Prince George Citizen*, 12 December 1957.

[55] The Inland Natural Gas Company later became BC Gas, then Terasen. The gas monopoly in British Columbia was held by two brothers – Frank McMahon, who owned the Westcoast Transmission Co. that built pipelines carrying gas to US consumers, and John McMahon, who owned Inland Natural Gas and sold the gas to consumers. Bob Harkins, "Prince George's Memorable Mayors" (speech, Forum 2000 Millennium Series, 7 October 1999) College of New Caledonia Library, http://www.cnc.bc.ca/__shared/ assets/2000harkins-pdf4411.pdf accessed 13 February 2008.

[56] "Council to Demand Gas Distribution This Year," *The Prince George Citizen*, 25 March 1958.

[57] "Gas Giants Denying Our Rights: Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 24 April 1958.

approximately $3,000 per month in tax revenue for the city.[58] But Gray pointed out that "at no time had Inland promised to deliver gas to Prince George at a lower rate. [...] She accused Inland of 'confusing the issue' and pointed out that the charge for gas being asked is 'considerably higher [than] the gas that goes by our door to the United States."[59]

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC), headed by Dean H. F. Angus, was called to hold a hearing on the matter. Gray surprised the PUC by announcing council's plan to go into the gas distribution service itself, with the Prince George Gas Co. acting as agent, to ensure that citizens received a fair price.[60] In her speech to the PUC, Gray pointed a finger at the Commission for "'selling the public short' by allowing Inland Gas to stand between them and a supply of gas at reasonable rates." She went on to say, 'I fail to see why, after failing to get the franchise with the city, Inland Natural Gas is still in the picture. I am alarmed at the tactics employed by this company to try to set aside a free vote of free people.'"[61] One of the tactics Gray was referring to here was a threatening letter she received from Westcoast Transmission Co. Ltd.[62] By going into business for itself, the city of Prince George did not require a certificate from the PUC.[63] As a result of these hearings, the PUC issued a

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[58] "Mayor Raps Inland Gas For Gas Programme: Loder Says P.G. Gas Allegiance 'Protecting,'" *The Prince George Citizen*, 13 May 1958.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Mayor Puts City in Gas Business By-Passes PUC at Dramatic Session: PG Gas Withdraws Its Application," *The Prince George Citizen*, 3 July 1958.

[61] Ibid.

[62] "Mayor Gray Receives Threatening Letter," *The Prince George Citizen*, 22 July 1958; Valerie Giles, "Remembering... PG's Feisty Mayor: Carrie Jane Gray," *The Prince George Citizen*, date unknown, from the private records of the Gray family. The Westcoast Transmission Co. owned the main gas lines in British Columbia.

[63] "Mayor Puts City in Gas Business."

"conditional certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity" to the Inland Natural Gas Co. Gray's response was that the PUC

> has no right to certify a public utility in competition with a municipal gas system, which the city has the statutory authority to establish and is establishing, with the pipe having already been laid on 80 city blocks. [....] According to the statutes under which this commission was set up they have no jurisdiction over a municipally-owned system within the city's boundaries.[64]

However, when asked to vote on a bylaw for the establishment of a city gas system, the electorate defeated the bylaw by a margin of four per cent.[65] Prince George then had no choice but to use Inland Gas and their conditional certificate.

Council decided to request Inland make an amendment to the certificate requiring them to proceed with work on the gas distribution system "without delay," but that they had to wait until the electorate had a chance to vote on whether to give them the franchise for distributing gas in the city.[66] Inland Gas at first agreed, but then changed its mind. Gray wrapped it up in a nutshell when she said: "'This whole thing reminds me of a dose of castor oil – the government is holding our noses and the PUC is shoving it down our throats.'"[67] The electorate voted overwhelmingly "no" to the Inland Natural Gas Co," but the plebiscite was inconsequential.[68] The PUC forced the city to accept Inland's offer, or "do without."[69] The only thing left to negotiate was the existing pipes that Prince George Gas had laid the summer before; Inland wanted to duplicate the system, at great expenditure to the city, refusing to

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[64] "PUC Action Won't Affect Gas Vote," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 July 1958.

[65] "Inland 'Very Happy' to Approach Council: Giscome Gas to Be Cheaper?" *The Prince George Citizen*, 19 September 1958.

[66] " City Council Makes Deal With Inland Gas: City Committed to Buy From Inland Gas," *The Prince George Citizen*, 3 October 1958; "Inland Again Reverses Stand," *The Prince George Citizen*, 4 November 1958.

[67] "Inland Again Reverses Stand," *The Prince George Citizen*, 4 November 1958.

[68] "Inland Gas Contract Rejected By Majority," *The Prince George Citizen*, 12 December 1958.

[69] Harkins.

lease the system from PG Gas. Inland finally bought the system at a "heavy loss" to PG Gas.[70] Carrie Jane Gray's role in all this was to defend the people's voice through the two referendums and to help the Prince George Natural Gas Company resist annihilation by a large monopoly. Although she was unable to stop Inland Natural Gas, she did achieve her goals: she continually supported her city and its citizens.

Gray's career in politics ended abruptly, but temporarily, at the end of her term as mayor. As per usual, she ran without a platform, saying "'I have no axe to grind and will give each matter that comes up my undivided attention.'"[71] Her lone opponent was Garvin Dezell who was mayor when Gray first stepped into civic office. It was a tight race and Dezell won by a margin of 64 votes with yet another record voter turnout.[72] Gray's only response was "'I am astonished. [...] I'm not going to say anymore except to wish him well."[73] Dezell, however, was not surprised: "'In all sincerity I think it boils down to too much friction' between Mayor Gray and some aldermen."[74] The end of her mayoralty also made headlines across the province. The *Times Colonist* said the "Stormy petrel [is] gone" and that "[s]ome of her former council mates showed no signs of regret Thursday when she ended a two-year term as the city's mayor on the same stormy note that has prevailed through much of her time in office."[75] After four years off council, Gray felt it was time to return in 1965. Her husband had died the year before and "politics was her life. That was like returning to

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[70] "Prince George Gas Company Winds Up," *The Prince George Citizen*, 17 November 1958.
[71] "No Platform For Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 3 December 1959.
[72] "New Mayor for Prince George: Garvin Dezell in Record Vote," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 December 1959.
[73] "'Wish Him Well', Says 'Astonished' Mayor," *The Prince George Citizen*, 18 December 1959.
[74] Ibid.
[75] "Stormy Petrel Gone," *Victoria Times Colonist*, 1 January 1960

a job for people in a career ... she missed it."[76] Gray's second round of aldermanic terms was peppered with her struggles to improve the city. She wanted a covered swimming pool, an expanded system of city parks and skating rinks, she took up the cause of the cemetery again, and she fought for improved hospital service until her retirement in 1975. Her legacy was improving the city and practicing politics like a tax-payer, rather than a tax-spender.

Out of the three women, Doreen Lawson was the only one to stand on a platform supporting one major need: environmental protection. Council took Lawson's suggestions and opinions seriously, for many of the aldermen themselves had environmental and urban growth concerns within their platforms. Lawson remarked that "Council and staff were very supportive of my environmental efforts, even though environmentalists were generally not held in high regard."[77] For example, in 1972, she proposed, and Council adopted, that Burnaby's creeks and streams be protected from further enclosure. As a result, 60 percent of Burnaby's waterways and surrounding ravines still exist and are an asset to the urban environment. Lawson's dedication allowed Burnaby Council to successfully resist "an initiative by the GVRD Water and Sewer Department to continue enclosing Still Creek." Indeed, Lawson's resolution to prohibit paving over existing streams and rivers "remains the most sweeping in the Lower Mainland, although most communities have been improving stream protection."[78] Along those same lines, Lawson proposed to council that action be taken to declare Burnaby Lake a wildlife

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[76] Langevin and Gray, interview.

[77] Unless otherwise cited, the following discussion is based on *Burnaby Centennial Anthology*, 488-489.

[78] "Alderman's Stream of Consciousness Fount for Burnaby," *The Vancouver Sun*, 12 March 1992.

sanctuary. Finally, ten years after she began her campaign, council adopted the recommendations in *A Development Programme for Burnaby Lake Regional Park*, a formal proposal she helped prepare, as a nature conservation area in 1976. By 1978, negotiations with the GVRD were concluded and Burnaby Lake Regional District Nature Park, consisting of 994 acres, was finally established.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Lawson continued to campaign for the rejuvenation of the lake and protection of wildlife in Burnaby Lake Regional Park. The lake has been an important fresh-water stopover for over 200 species of migrating birds in the Pacific Flyway. Without this stopover, the rarer of those birds would have faced the possibility of going from endangered species to extinct or extirpated species. In 1992, the year of Burnaby's centennial, Lawson wrote in a letter to the Burnaby City Council of 2042 that she hoped "lots of the colour green will still be seen when driving through, flying over, or sailing past Burnaby (if not, I just may be back to haunt you)."[79] Her success not only made Burnaby Lake into an important place of education, recreation, and preservation, but she also paved the way for other environmentalists to be taken seriously by council, businesses, and residents alike. In this way, she became a leader who brought environmental protection to the political stage in British Columbia.

Although environmental protection was Lawson's first priority, there were other issues that caught her attention as well. Urban sprawl was one. She promoted a book to council in 1972 called *Urban Structure* by Burnaby planner Gerhard Sixta. Many council members disagreed with the main argument of the book, but Lawson

[79] Biography of Doreen Lawson, located in "The Doreen Lawson Collection," record ID 2003-30, City of Burnaby Archives, 5.

felt it was important Burnaby residents had a chance to read it. Experts had postulated that by the year 2001, Burnaby's population would reach 250,000, nearly doubling the125,660 residents in the 1971 census.[80] Lawson argued that "'growth does not necessarily mean progress. [...] Growth can mean urban sprawl or it can mean well-planned high-density core areas with suburban and even some rural areas. *Urban Structure* has so many worthwhile recommendations that I believe the report as a whole has merit.'"[81] Council, even though many disagreed with the report, decided to publish a summary of the book to get feedback from Burnaby residents and businesses and, if necessary, hold a public hearing on the matter. Another issue that Lawson publicly took up later in her career was women's issues. In response to concerns by a Burnaby citizen about rapists being freed from prisons, Lawson "nudged her fellow council members [...] into considering several ways to raise awareness on rape-related issues" in 1981.[82] Lawson made suggestions to the council that "the subject of the release of rapist-murderers be canvassed with the appropriate federal and provincial ministries, the Simon Fraser University criminology department, local Rape Relief units and [...] the National Parole Board."[83] Even though her main concern was protecting the environment, Lawson showed interest and helped create awareness for other issues important to her, and because her opinion was respected within her council and community, people listened.

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[80] "'Series of Ant-Hills' Feared in Burnaby Development," *The Columbian*, 28 March 1972; "British Columbia Municipal Census Populations 1921 to 1971," Province of British Columbia webpage <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun/Mun2171.asp> accessed 15 January 2007.

[81] "'Series of Ant-Hills.'"

[82] "Heighten Rape Awareness, Ald. Lawson Urges Council," *Burnaby Today*, 28 October 1981.

[83] Ibid.

The accomplishments that these women achieved as individuals are important reminders that the women involved in municipal politics should not be excluded from the scholarly study of politics in general. However, as a group, that these women broke down the doors of city hall is an even more important reminder of the struggle to overcome public perceptions generated through the media and false impressions of feminism. Although Gray, Wood, and Lawson avoided alliance with any feminist beliefs, they were often coerced to defend their positions as women. Estelle B. Freedman's definition of feminism best describes Wood, Gray, Lawson, and their contemporaries because their main struggle in politics, even though they may not have acknowledged it openly at the time, was for equality. For some, it was not just equality between the sexes; class and ethnicity also impacted this struggle.

The standard to which they were compared – male political attitudes and behaviours – brought about a "Victor Victoria" effect where these women were expected to maintain feminine respectability while exhibiting masculine traits known to be successful in politics. The media often scrutinized the looks and the home lives of women in politics rather than their platforms and opinions on the issues, perpetuating ideas that women could easily be placated by inane flattery. While many women in broader spectrum politics were encouraged to downplay their family lives, women in municipal politics found their family obligations a useful setting for promoting themselves as upstanding citizens and not shirking their biological duties. Melanie Buddle's work on analyzing the image of women in business in British Columbia relates well to women in politics because in order to remain non-threatening to men in the business world, emphasizing femininity created the illusion

that they were not challenging gender roles; rather, they were revealing themselves able to compete with men. The media's emphasis on women's clothing and hairstyles in the long run did not flatter or help women like Wood, Gray, and Lawson demonstrate themselves as competent politicians; it only served to belittle their character. The individual and collective experiences of these women reveal that it was necessary for these women to conceal any feminist beliefs they may have had in order to make themselves appear less threatening to the public and their colleagues. By stressing their commitment to their communities and working to improve the quality of life for all citizens, these women demonstrated that women were equal to the task while reining in overt feminist thought and discussion. At the end of the day, however, their actions and attitudes opened doors for women, demonstrating that they were feminists and not just the shapeliest legs under the council table.

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Appendix 1

Acknowledgements for Figures Presented in the Introduction

The sources of information and numbers about women in British Columbia municipal politics came from several archives and city halls across the province as well as *The Vancouver Sun*'s annual tally of municipal elections. The statistics shown in the Introduction of this thesis were taken only from the towns and cities that had a population base greater than 4,000 in 1950. This number was chosen because Prince George, the smallest town of the three councils on which Carrie Jane Gray, Beth Wood, and Doreen Lawson served, had a population of 4,703 in 1950. I would also like to thank the following people for their interest in this thesis and taking the time to contribute what information they had.

City/Town	Name	Place
Burnaby	Arilea Sill	City of Burnaby Archives
Chilliwack	Shannon Anderson	Chilliwack Museum and Archives
Coquitlam	Stephanie Unrau	City of Coquitlam Archives
Delta	Kate McPherson	Delta Museum and Archives
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Maple Ridge	Valerie Billesberger	Maple Ridge Museum
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Mission	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
Nanaimo	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
Nelson	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
New Westminster	Kelly Stewart	New Westminster Museum and Archives
North Cowichan	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
North Vancouver	Daien Ide	North Vancouver Museum and Archives Community History Centre
Oak Bay	Linda M. Davies	Oak Bay Archives
Penticton	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
Port Alberni	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
Prince George	Carli Boyden	The Exploration Place
Prince Rupert	Monica Lamb-Yorski	Prince Rupert Archives
Richmond	Lynne Waller	City of Richmond Archives
Saanich	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*
Surrey	Ryan Gallagher	Surrey Archives
Trail	Sarah Benson	Trail Museum and Archives
Vancouver	Megan Schlase	City of Vancouver Archives *The Vancouver Sun* City of Vancouver web page: http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/pastcouncils.htm
Vernon	Marg Bailey	City of Vernon

	Susan Blakely	*The Vancouver Sun*
Victoria	N/A	City of Victoria web page: http://www.victoria.ca/archives/archives_refmayor.shtml
West Vancouver	N/A	*The Vancouver Sun*